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THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

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By
MUHAMMAD HAMIDULLAH

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THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

WITH MAPS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND SKETCHES

A CONTRIBUTION TO MUSLIM MILITARY HISTORY

By

MUHAMMAD HAMIDULLAH

3rd Revised Edition

HYDERABAD-DECCAN

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Dedicated gratefully to late Mr. 'Ali Musa Riza Muhajir, of Hyderabad-Deccan, who gave me the idea of attempting this study, and as the scout-master of the Babur-Shahi Headquarters Rover Scouts Troop, to which I belonged, initiated me in the elements of surveying and map-making.

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DETAILS OF DIFFERENT VERSIONS AND EDITIONS

French

By the author himself: *Les champs de bataille au temps du Prophete*, in: Revue des Etudes Islamiques, Paris, 1939, and off-print.

Urdu

By the author himself: عہدِ نبوی کے میدانِ جنگ

Majallah Tahqiqat (*Ilmiyah*), Research Journal of the Osmania University, Hyderabad-Deccan, Vol. VII, 1940, and reprint; 2nd revised edition, Hyderabad-Deccan; 3rd revised edition, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1945.

By the General Muhammad Akbar Khan, Urdu translation of extracts from the English version, incorporated in his

حدیث دفاع Karachi, 1954.

English

By the author himself: *The Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad*, in: *Islamic Review*, Woking - London, 1952-53, and reprint; 2nd revised edition, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1973; 3rd revised edition is the present one.

Arabic

Captain in the General Staff (sagh arkan harb) Abdul-Fattah Ibrahim, Arabic translation of the extracts of the French version incorporated in his:

محمد القائد Cairo, 1954.

Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Wahhab ad-Dihlawi, translation of the last chapter of the English version, in: *Al-Hajj*, Mecca.

Persian

Ghulam Rida Sa'idi, translated from the English under the title : رسول اکرم در میدان جنگ Tehran, 1956; (2nd edition 1971)

Turkish

Salih Tug, translated from English, under the title : *Hazret Paygamberin Savasleri*, Istanbul, 1962; (2nd edition 1972, 3rd revised ed.)

Malayalam

A gentleman demanded permission to translate, and later informed its serial publication in a magazine, but never cared to reply as to the details, much less to send a set of the numbers in which it had appeared in South India, to the author. God forgive him.

Sindhi

A gentleman demanded permission to translate. That was the first and the last occasion of hearing from him.

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NEW FOREWORD

After almost a decade, when a new edition is being printed, I have taken the liberty of making several corrections and additions, in the light of my latest knowledge—God Almighty alone is Omniscient—and I thank both the editor and the mass of readers for this publication.

It is sad to note that, more than anything else, science has become the victim of the material prosperity of human beings, science is getting less and less accessible to the student owing to costs of printing and posting getting dearer and dearer; and as ever, the real and most deserving student remains in the poorest of the social classes.

Anyhow one of the reasons of the renewal of the publication of this work is, on the one hand, the ever more virulent attacks on the part of some of the ignorant sections of humanity against the life of the Prophet of Islam, and, on the other, the demand of the justice-loving sections who want to know the truth about the subject.

Without in the least pretending to have succeeded in replying to the ones and satisfying the others, I have contributed my mite, seeking nothing but the truth, in as objective a manner as is possible to me, basing me on the best of the classical sources.

It may be permitted to reply by the way to a question which has sometimes been asked and its very nature is misleading the unthinking minds, viz. Should a prophet fight? The history of war in human society is a vast subject. Let us limit ourself here to the barest minimum. The Hindu law does not proscribe it. The Old Testament is essentially the description of the wars waged by prophets Moses downwards. It

cannot be asserted that Jesus Christ has forbidden war. For St Luke (19/27) reports a saying of Jesus: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I shall reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me". That it is to be taken in its literal sense is the opinion of even such an authority as St Paul (cf I Corintians 15/25): "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet". Another saying of Jesus (cf Matthew 10/34) is: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I am come not to send peace, but a sword". Even the parable reported by Mark 12/1-9 and Luke 20/9-16 clearly allows war in the last report against the incorrigible oppressors. Further, the Crusades, which were organized by Popes were the "holy wars" of the Christians. This on the one hand. On the other, if war were left to lay commanders, there is less hope of a humane conduct during a war than is expected from a prophet whose very acts are controlled by Divine inspiration. A prophet as a commander of the army is more in the interest of humanity than even the greatest military genius from among lay men. We shall see the difference in the following pages.

PARIS, Rabi'ul-Auwal 1400 H. *Muhammad Hamidullah*

FOREWORD TO THE LAST EDITION

After about two decades when the new edition of the present study is called for opportunity is taken to effect necessary changes and ameliorations both in the contents and presentation. In the meanwhile I have published a comprehensive work *"Le Prophete de l' Islam, sa vie et son oeuvre"* (Life and Work of the Prophet of Islam; 2 Vols., Paris, 1959). If I treat the subject here from military point of view, one will find there, in the chapters concerned, details about the context, reasons and political and other consequences of these battles, and also the details of the Military Department of the State Administration.

Although it was flattering to see that some of the very high ranking military-men have found this non-professional attempt worth being translated and commented by them into a least two languages, alas my dream is still unrealised which aspired to visit *all* the sites of the battles engaged by the holy Prophet in person—25 such occasions are recorded by historians —and even of those of his time when he was present. I hope, one day a group of military scientists equipped with necessary instruments, would undertake the task, and thoroughly investigate the terrain; and with the help of historians, produce a work worth the subject.

I think I must not miss the opportunity of this edition, to reply to a question which a number of my readers have been asking. These friends, pious and well-meaning Muslims all, are surprised that I never refer to the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad in my description of his "great exploits". My humble reply is that I am not dealing with a general and com-

prehensive life of the Messenger of Islam, in order to discuss this point. If he had achieved his successes by miracles only, his life could not be an *uswah hasanah*, a practical example to follow by the common man, which it was according to the Qur'an. Unless this human aspect of cause and effect is put before the common man—who does not and cannot rely on miracle, but has to help himself in the struggle of existence—he will not find the conduct of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ worthy and a practical example to imitate.

For those who want to learn about the miracles which took place at the hand of the Prophet of Islam, about their scientific possibility, their philosophic basis, etc. I may refer to a book in Urdu, *Sirat al-Nabi* by Shibli and Sulaiman Nadwi, where a whole and bulky volume has been consecrated to this subject. My own effort has been here, to glean such data as could serve to elucidate the human and practical aspect of his exalted life. May God bless his memory!

Paris ; 1392 H. *Author.*

The Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad

CHAPTER 1

Preliminary remarks

(1) In the course of the present century, methods and principles of warfare have changed, due to the phenomenal development of science, to such an extent that ancient campaigns, however epoch-making in their own time, now look like child's play. It is no more too much for the so-called Big Powers to mobilize nowadays by a single stroke of the pen armies of millions on either side. Armament has so greatly been transformed that the top secret deadly engines of our own younger days are more useful in museums than on the field of actual battle. On the administration side, the means of communication, information and transportation have undergone such a change in power, number and speed, that the work, which formerly took months, is now accomplished in hours or even minutes.

(2) The layman might therefore be thinking that the description of the wars of yore, however important or captivating to an historian, had no practical military value in the changed circumstances. But no, the recruits and cadets, in Britain for instance, are still taught in their very first lesson that :

> "It must be understood by all officers that the most important part of their individual training is the work they do by themselves. ...Military history must unquestionably have the most important place in such study as being the best means of learning the true meaning of the principles of war and their application, and of studying the preponderating part which human nature plays in all operations.....Military history, as already stated, is of great importance in the instruction of officers. It is for this reason that a special

campaign, or a special period of a campaign, is selected every year for general study during the individual training season.

"In the study of military history the object should be to derive from the records of the past campaigns lessons applicable to the present. To read with a view to acquiring merely knowledge of historical events is of little value. The size of modern armies and their approved armaments and means of communication render many lessons of the past inapplicable to the present. *But human nature and the underlying principles of war do not change, and it is for this reason that valuable lessons can be learned from EVEN THE MOST ANCIENT CAMPAIGNS" (War Office Training Regulations,* pp. 23ff. London 1934).

The importance of the battles of the Prophet Muhammad to a military tactician and strategist

(3) It is obvious that full use of the study of ancient campaigns can be made only when it is carefully scrutinized and when we find out how the commanders applied the principles and what were the results. The battles fought by Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him!), are characteristic of the man, conspicuous, head and shoulders above many others, past or present. He had fought the enemy, often three times, and on some occasions even twelve and more times, the number he could himself deploy, and he was practically always victorious. Again, his "empire", which commenced with some of the streets of a small City-State, — for not all the town rallied to him at first — expanded at the average rate of over 830 kilometres daily; and after ten years of political activity, when he breathed his last, he was ruling over some three million square kilometres. This area, as big as Europe minus Russia, and inhabited certainly by millions of people at that time, was conquered at a cost of less than 250 men killed

on the battlefields[1] on the enemy side. Loss of Muslims was at the rate of one martyr a month for a period of ten years at an average. This respect of human blood is unequalled in the annals of man. Moreover, the firmness of occupation, the mental transformation of the conquered and their complete assimilation, and the production of such trained officers who in a bare fifteen years after the death of the leader delivered millions of square miles from *bellum omnium contra omnes* to enjoy the *pax Islamica* and to be ruled from Medina in three

---

[1] Here is how we calculate: According to Ibn Hisham, the Prophet left Madinah on 27 occasions, but only in 9 of them there was fighting. The expeditions or detachments sent under some Companion number, according to the same source, 38 yet not many of them were military. The following list is not exhaustive, since data of casualities is lacking for certain occasions, yet it will give a rough idea of the "wars" of that time:

Occasion	*Enemy force*	*Enemy killed*	*Muslim force*	*Muslims killed*
Badr	950	70	313	14
Uhud	3,000	22	700	70
Mustaliq	200(?)	10	30(?)	1
Khandaq	12,000	8	3,000	6
Khaibar	20,000	93	1,500	15
Mu'ta	1,00,000	?	3,000	13
Mecca	?	13	10,000	3
Hunain	?	?	12,000	4
Ta'if	?	?	12,000	12
	Total	216		138

We exclude from this list the peaceful Muslim missionaries butchered treacherously in Raji' and Bi'r Ma'unah (about 44 in all), and also the prisoners of war of the battle of Banu Quraizah, who were not killed on the battlefield, but after the surrender and the decision of the arbitrator of their own choice who applied to them their own Biblical law (*Deuteronomy*, XX. 13-14) and their own practice (cf. infra § 206). Were the data for all the battles available, we do not think that the number of Muslims killed would exceed 150, and the number of the enemy killed more than 250. Even the battle of Tabuk, with some 30,000 Muslims, no fighting seems to have taken place, although Ailah and other parts of Palestine were then annexed to the Islamic territory at the expense of the Byzantine Empire.

continents[1] — these and similar other phenomena arouse in us an intense curiosity to study the wars of the time of the Prophet. These wars of the Prophet had nothing in common, except the name, with our mundane wars, and we see in his wars the truth of his own saying : "I am the Prophet of Battle, I am the Prophet of Mercy". (Ibn Taimiyah, *as-Siyasah ash-Shar'iyah*, p. 8, etc.)

Difficulties of the task of writing on the battlefields of the Prophet

(4) The task, however, is not easy. Every civilized language of the world, besides the original source, Arabic, has produced more or less lengthy biographies of the man styled by the Qur'an (21/107) as "A Mercy unto the worlds", friendly as well as hostile. There is no dearth of data on his wars. Still, I have so far [2] neither read nor heard any thing about the description of his wars, not from the point of view of history but from that of the military science. To write on the wars of 1,300 odd years ago requires a knowledge of historical data as well as of military training. I am not a student of history, and have not had the good fortune of leading an army life, rejected as I was on physical grounds on my candidature for cadetship in the army. Yet it would be sheer waste

---

1That is, Europe, Asia and Africa. According to Tabariy (*Annales*, I, 2817), it was in the year 27H., under the 3rd Orthodox Caliph, Uthman that the Muslim armies entered Andalus (Spain), and stayed there even when reinforcements discontinued, and they were cut off from all help from the home country. Tariq did not land in Gibraltar until 65 years later. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, V. 555, too has a vague, idea of the fact. See my Arabic article : "*Fat'h al-Andalus fi Khilafat Saiyidina 'Uthman sanat 27 H.*", in the Islam Tetkikleri Enstitusu Dergisi, Istanbul, VII/1-2, 1978, p 221-6. To this are to add the whole of North Africa, from Egypt and Nubia to Morocco ; in Asia from Arabia to Transoxiana. This would give an idea of the extent of the Islamic territory in the days of the caliph, 'Uthman.

2Since writing this in 1939, I have come across a Turkish, a Pakistani (English) and an Arabic book, but works not based on minute study on the spot leave to be desired. The Turkish work dates from before the First World War.

A map of Arabia

Cave of Hira', where the first-revelation came

of time to wait and pray for the coming of a qualified person combining both the capacities and being disposed to undertake the task. The data I was able to collect by reading was diffidently published first after twice visiting the sites concerned, not for the benefit of others but for inciting the interest, through a non-professional challenge, to those who could revise the data and could better the conclusions. During the last 50 years not only the historical research continued on my part, but also I have had the good luck of paying three more visits to several of these sites — including a short visit to Khaibar—and these have enabled me to revise considerably the text. The results of the third visit were incorporated in the first English edition. Those of the fourth and fifth visits are included here. All this is a raw material for some future Muslim expert of military science: I have done my duty, let him do his.

GENERAL SURVEY

The rebuff of the Meccans and Ta'ifians to the efforts of the Prophet Muhammad at preaching the unity of God

(5) It is commonly known that the Prophet of Islam began to preach his teachings of the unity of God in the city of Mecca[1] from the year 13 B.H.—610 C.E., for which he said he was called on by a Divine Revelation received in the cave of Hira. This call was, on the one hand, against a prevalent hereditary belief in idolatry, and on the other hand, to accept it meant the acceptance of its teacher as the leader. As this latter implied the transfer of chieftainship to a junior family, not only other leading and materially more influential families in the city, but even the elder relatives of the Prophet Muhammad himself, of the family of the Banu Hashim, resented it vehemently. When the senior family in the city took to active opposition, the commonalty were forced, as everywhere, to do likewise even as grass and husk in the face of a strong

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[1] For the politico-social life in that city at that time, cf my article 'City-State of Mecca' in the quarterly *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1938.

wind.

(6) The Prophet had concentrated all his time, effort and resources to the one object of furthering the reform movement. Yet in spite of the passing of eight to ten years, even the small town — as Mecca, his birthplace, was then — could not be rallied : on the contrary, the very life of the preacher fell into danger, so vehement was the opposition. In spite of all round hostility there were those who began embracing Islam, yet these were so terribly persecuted by their co-citizens that several of them lost their life—including a woman, Pamikh Sumaiyah, mother of 'Ammar ibn Yasir, probably of Turkish origin, cf Baladhuriy, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, I, 489 and 718—and scores of others had to flee abroad and take refuge in the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia. Muhammad's affectionate wife, Khadijah, and his uncle and protector, Abu Talib, both died about the same time, and this double loss brought great and unexpected difficulties. For the new head of the clan, his uncle Abu Lahab, who was antagonistic to the movement from the very beginning, began to reprimand him, and finally excommunicated and outlawed him. Muhammad had to leave the town and seek new protectors. The family of his maternal uncles, the Banu 'Abd Yalil (cf. Abu Nu'aim *Dala'il an-Nubuwah*, ch. 20, or his *al-Muntaqa*, § 20, my own *MS.*), lived in Ta'if. His younger uncle and intimate friend, 'Abbas, had considerable influence there on account of his banking and business, as some historians assure us. Moreover, it is not very far from Mecca, the distance being about 50 miles. I myself started in 1939 on a donkey at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and reached the base of Mount Kara by midnight, and, resuming the uphill journey early next morning, reached Ta'if before midday. Camels, which follow the route of Ja'irranah, take two days to arrive. The new motor route is a bit longer, about 70 miles, and the post van conveyed me back to Mecca in about four hours, with all its halts. In fact Ta'if, which had the same attraction for Meccans, even in those days, as hill stations in Eastern summers have for us, attracted the Prophet Muhammad for

entirely different reasons. He travelled there accompanied by a freed-slave and family servant of his, Zaid Ibn Harithah, and had, if not very high hopes, at least a chance worth trying. Yet the relatives there proved worse than strangers. Ta'if was more materialistic than Mecca. Mecca was the sole market for the products of Ta'if, and during the hot seasons it benefited from the tourist traffic of rich Meccans, who frequented that hill station every year. Hence, perhaps, it could not afford to irritate or displease Mecca. Moreover, in preaching the religion of the unity of God, a messenger of His had in Ta'if also the same handicap as in Mecca : the local potentates saw therein a direct threat to their own vested interests, power and prestige. The Prophet implored his maternal uncles there, though in vain, that they at least should not divulge the news of the mission on which he had come.

(7) Ta'if even today preserves the gardens and other sites connected with the memorable visit of the Prophet Muhammad ; the garden where he took refuge from mischievous street boys who chased and stoned him relentlessly, until both he and his servant bled with wounds. It is said the kind hearted proprietor of a garden gave him shelter and feasted him with a bunch of grapes at the hand of a Christian slave of his, 'Addas by name. These gardens and farms are nowadays outside the walled town, in a south-west direction, along the river bed of the valley of Wajj. In 1939, the sites were commemorated by means of tiny mosques, then mostly in need of repair.

People assembled at the annual fairs held near Mecca turn a cold shoulder to the preaching of the Prophet Muhammad

(8) The journey to Ta'if proved so utterly futile that it seemed preferable to the Prophet Muhammad to return to Mecca even though he was outlawed there. Reaching the outskirts of the city, he made several attempts to acquire the protection of some local non-Muslim personality. Ordinarily, the sense of self-respect of no Arab would ever allow him to

refuse such a request from anybody, even at the peril of his own life, yet the circumstances demanded an extraordinarily noble character to acquiesce in this respect. In the third attempt at last he succeeded, and Mut'im Ibn 'Adiy and his sons escorted him safely first to the shrine of Ka'bah, where he performed his prayer-service, and then to his house (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 251)[1]. Apparently he had to promise in return that he would no more preach publicly in Mecca. A decade had now passed over his mission.

(9) There was no restriction on his activity outside the town. The pre-Islamic institution of pilgrimage was there, as also the annual fairs of 'Ukaz, Majannah, Dhu'l-Majaz, etc., none very far from Mecca. The assembly of pilgrims in Mina, about two to three miles east of the centre of Mecca, was an open, though none the less difficult, field of action. So a few months after his return from Ta'if we find the Prophet Muhammad in the month of Dhul 'l-Hijjah anno 3 B.H., presenting himself, in succession, to as many as fifteen different contingents of pilgrims, coming from the four corners of Arabia (cf. *Ibn Hisham*, pp. 282-3; *Ibn Sa'd*, 1/1, 145; Abu Nu'aim, *al-Muntaqa*, folio 105-17, my MS.; the same *Dala'il an-Nubuwah*, p. 100-104). He, on the one hand, explained to them the principles and objects of his mission, and on the other requested them to accord him their protection and take him to their country wherefrom to continue his activities. He assured them finally that very soon the treasures of the Caesars and the Chosroes would be laid at the feet of those who followed him (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 278). It sounded all so ridiculous to them at that time. If one cut a sarcastic joke, another rebuked him outright, while yet another politely excused himself, saying that his people dared not court hostility to the Quraishite Meccans. What perseverance he had: one after another, he tried fifteen groups. Every time a Quraishite

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[1]Ibn Hisham *Sirat Rasulillah*, p. 251. References to this book are from the European edition.

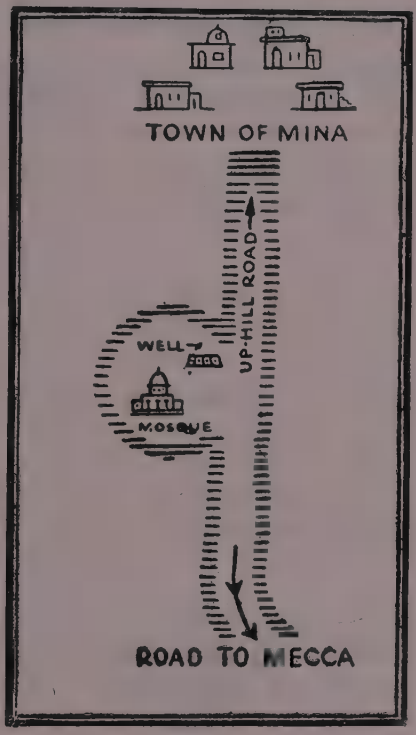
Mosque of 'Aqabah where the 'Aqabah pact was concluded

Thanivat al-Wada' in Quba (South of Madina)

fanatic—in fact his own paternal uncle Abu Lahab—followed him and warned every tribal group of the futility of listening to a "lunatic sorcerer", who at the same time brought a challenge to the Meccans (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 282).

The site of 'Aqabah and the Pact of 'Aqabah

(10) Near the plain of Mina, there is on both sides of the road from Mecca a chain of hills rising like a continuous wall. When going from Mecca, just a furlong before crossing into Mina, there is in this mountainous wall a curve on the left side of the traveller a curve in the form of an arch or a semi-circle, big enough to contain the Juma Masjid of Delhi or St. Paul's of London. This place is called 'Aqabah — originally and more correctly "Near the 'Aqabah", since 'Aqabah literally means a mountain pass, an uphill passage between two parallel mountains, and early historians called it *'Ind al-'Aqabah*.[1]



A map showing the site of 'Aqabah. The curve on the left-hand side marks the historic site of the Pact of 'Aqabah. The Mosque in the curve is known as Masjid al-'Asharah (the Mosque of the Ten). An inscription of caliph al-Mansur is still preserved there.

[1] For instance al-Fasiy, look below.

(11) Inside the curve of 'Aqabah there is actually a big well, and agriculture thrives. The place where the Pact of 'Aqabah was concluded by the Prophet Muhammad is commemorated from ancient times by a mosque of medium size. That this is very old may be deduced from the fact that it preserves several inscriptions in Kufic, some of which have been deciphered and studied by Muhammad al-Far', in his Arabic article " al-Khatt al-'Arabi", in the Risalah al-Masjid, Mecca, I/ii, 1979, p. 79-93. It had no roof even when I visited it last in 1947, only the four walls standing. The mosque is now called by the local people the *Masjid al-'Asharah* (the Mosque of the Ten). There is, however, no doubt whatever that this is the mosque of the Pact of 'Aqabah, for the famous expert of the history of Mecca, Taqi ad-Din al-Fasiy, in the third edition of his history of the holy city, *Tahsil al-Maram fi Akhbar al-Balad al-haram* (*MS.* Qarawiyyin, Fes), writes :

"And the mosque of the Pact . . . This mosque lies close to the mountain pass ('Aqabah) of Mina : between it, i.e., the mosque and the *'Aqabah*, there is a stone's throw or slightly more. It is on the left of one going (from Mecca) towards Mina. It was constructed in the year 144, and again in 629 by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mustansir, the former being constructed by al-Mansur."

(12) In short, this 'Aqabah curve is so big that twenty to fifty persons can gather there without being noticed by passers-by. It was here that the Prophet Muhammad met half a dozen people from Medina. It is not clear whether they had camped there or had merely come there when Muhammad met them and addressed to them his message. This party heard the call of Islam and the Unity of God with interest, and unlike others, found it worthwhile to accept it and co-operate with the Prophet (*Ibn Hisham* p. 286ff).

(13) What was the reason for their sympathetic bent and mental difference from other Arabs ? They were Medinites of the tribe of the Khazraj, to which the grandmother of the Prophet belonged (*Ibn Hisham* p. 107), and his mother had

paid a visit to them even when Muhammad, our Prophet, was a young boy, and she had stayed there long enough to enable the boy to learn "good swimming in the spacious well of the Banu an-Najjar" (*Sirah Sha'miyah*). Again, 'Abbas, the younger uncle of the Prophet, too, used to pass several days in Medina with this tribe every time he went to Syria or returned from there, in connection with his commerce (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 294), thus keeping the relationship alive. Moreover, these Medinites had relations of alliance with some of their local Jewish tribes and those of hostility with some others; and hence they must constantly have heard that the Jews awaited the arrival of a Prophet regarding whom the Jews asserted they would follow him and subdue under his leadership all their enemies (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 286). Why not follow the same promised prophet and steal a prior right to honours and victories? When 'Abd al-Muttalib, grandfather of the Prophet, and Naufal, the former's uncle had provoked between themselves a serious quarrel in Mecca, the Khazrajites of Medina had rushed military aid in favour of 'Abd al-Muttalib (Tabariy, *Hist.* I. pp. 1084-86). Possibly, the Khazrajites now expected the help of the clan of the Prophet Muhammad against their cousins and erstwhile enemies, the Awsites of Medina.

(14) Whatever the original reasons, the grace of God guided them, and their own reason and mental abilities prompted them to embrace Islam forthwith.

(15) The feuds of the Arab tribes of Medina, the Awsites and the Khazrajites, had been responsible for much bloodshed for generations past. Both were exhausted now, and the saner members of either were prepared to end the hostilities and settle their relations at any cost (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 287). In view of their mutual jealousies and rivalries and *amour propre*, a non-Medinite, as a neutral, had obviously a greater chance of rallying them both and becoming the common superior and chieftain.

Islam begins to spread and the foundation stone of Islamic polity is laid

(16) When the six converted Khazrajites returned home

to Medina, and propagated their new faith, a number of others were soon persuaded to do likewise. The following year, during the same Hajj season, a dozen people, representing both the Awsites and the Khazrajites, including five persons of the previous year, met the Prophet Muhammad in the same 'Aqabah of Mina during the moonlit nights of the Hajj, offering their allegiance as well as that of their families. The Prophet enjoined on them belief in the absolute Unity of God, moral uprightness and obedience to the Prophet in every good act (*Ma'ruf*) (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 289, 305 ; *Ibn Hanbal*[1] III, p. 441).

(17) The Prophet Muhammad thus became, by a sort of social contract, the chief and commander of at least twelve Medinite families. And at their own request, ordered a Muslim teacher from Mecca to accompany them and supervise missionary activity in Medina as well as teaching and training converts in the details of the religious practices of their new faith (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 289). The missionary not only succeeded in a large measure, but also his tact and devotion to the cause cleared the way for the whole-hearted collaboration of the converts amongst each other, even from the factional groups of Aws and Khazraj, under the banner of Islam.

(18) One more year passed, and in the year 1 B.H. the Medinite contingent of about 500 pilgrims included 73 Muslims, men as well as women. They had come, along with their teacher, personally to offer their homage to their beloved Prophet and to invite him to migrate to their oasis. Islam was still the religion of the minority among the Medinites, and the majority of the Medinite contingent of pilgrims had come to seek a military alliance with the general Quraishites of Mecca. It was late in the moonlit night when the Muslims of Medina slipped quietly one after another to assemble together in the same holy 'Aqabah. The Prophet also appeared there at the appointed hour, accompanied by his uncle, the worldly-wise

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1References are to the first edition,

'Abbas. The Prophet explained to them what his mission stood for, and they in their turn proclaimed their belief in, and testified to the truth of, his mission. After that they invited him and his Meccan disciples (*Tafsir* of Tabariy, IX, p. 163) to migrate to Medina, assuring him that if he did so, "We shall protect you even as we protect our own families," and when it was told them that it might mean war with the whole world, they still continued firmly to stick to their resolve and protested that they would never go back on their pledge. The Prophet individually shook hands with them in pact, and said: "From now on I too belong to you: (your) blood is (my) blood and (your) remission is my remission" (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 297). Then he asked them to select their tribal chiefs, and approved the twelve names proposed by them for the twelve tribes (cf. *Ibn Hisham*, p. 297); and took the initiative of nominating one of these as the "chief of the chiefs" (cf. Baladhuriy, *Ansab*, ed. Cairo, I, 254, § Asad ibn Zurarah).

(19) This was the famous Pact of 'Aqabah which definitely laid the foundation stone of an Islamic polity, with men, territory and organization. Obviously, when the Quraish came to know of this pact, they resented it vehemently, and considered it a direct challenge to themselves and a league against them. The non-Muslim Medinite pilgrims, who did not know what had happened, tried to reassure them and denied all existence of a pact.

The growing strength of Islam irritates the Quraish of Mecca

(20) The irritation of the Quraishites was daily to increase when the Meccan Muslims secretly or openly began to migrate from their birthplace, and escape from the clutches of the Quraishite persecution.

(21) The period of the Truce of God (*Ashhur hurum*)[1] was apparently utilized by the Meccan Muslims for quitting their homes and hearths unmolested. The Quraish took a very serious view of the migration of the Muslim population from Mecca and their concentration in Medina on the trade artery of the Quraishites, in spite of the fact that many members of the very family of the Prophet were staunch "Meccans", and would not leave the town; on the contrary, they held important positions in city councils, such as 'Abbas, who was the head of the sacred well of Zamzam, and Abu Lahab, who was the worst enemy of Islam. So the Quraishites hatched a dangerous conspiracy against the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Obviously this was the end of all peace or tolerance, and an unconcealed act of war against Islamdom (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 323ff).

(22) The Prophet managed to leave his house while it

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[1]The months of the truce of God (*ashhur hurum*) were Dhu'l-Qa'dah, Dhu'l-Hijjah, Muharram and Rajab We know that the Meccans intercalated one month normally every third year, in order to equalize their lunar year with the solar year. We also know that this 13th month intervened between the 12th and the 1st months of the calendar, that is between Dhu'l-Hijjah and Muharram. The data concur to the effect that the last intercalation had taken place at the end of the year 9 of Hijrah, before the Holy Prophet abolished that practice, a year later, from the Islamic calendar This implies a difference of four months, at the time of the Hijrah of the Prophet, between the intercalary and the non-intercalary calendars. According to my calculations (see for details: Journal of Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, October 1968, Vol. XVI, 213-219; revised and enlarged version: "The Nasi', the Hijra Calendar and the Need of Preparing a New Concordance for the Hijra and Gregorian Eras", in the Islamic Review, Woking, LVII/2, 1969, p. 6-12), the 1st Muharram of the year 1 H. was on 21st March 622. It may incidentally be recalled that, although the Prophet Muhammad himself left Mecca in the 3rd month (Rabi' al-Auwal), the Muslim Calendar reckons the year from the month of Muharram,; that the year 1 of the Hijrah was variously counted by early Muslims: some counted the departure of the Prophet in the year 1—and this has prevailed—other persons thought it occuring in the year 2 H. and yet others in the year 1, Before Hijrah. Unless one keeps this in mind, the differing dates of the same incidents in different narration may bewilder the reader.

was actually besieged by those who had come with the avowed intention of murdering him when he came out (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 323ff), — and according to Ibn Hanbal (I, 84) and others, he went first accompanied by 'Aliy to the Ka'bah, and demolished the principal idol placed on the top of the Ka'bah, left the township of Mecca, spent three nights in the cave of Thaur, until agitation subsided in the city, and finally set out for Medina early in the month of Rabi' I, by a route not commonly used, and reached his destination in about twelve nights' journey. The news of his "disappearance" had preceded him to Medina, and naturally people guessed his destination. After several days of anxious expectancy and disappointments, the people of Quba, a village south of Medina, espied one day from afar a small caravan of two camels plying in the hot sun towards their township. They were not wrong this time, and the Prophet Muhammad, a slave servant of his, and Abu Bakr, were led by a hired guide. Words fail to describe the stir and joyous enthusiasm of the population at the arrival of the Prophet of God, and supreme head of their religion and their polity. Men and women, young and old, all put on their best attire and took their weapons and clustered on a prominent mound which is still commemorated as *Thaniya al-Wada*, on the southern side of the city of Medina, in order to gaze down on him and receive him with a welcome unsurpassed in sincerity by any in human history. The girls chanted along with boys, beating tambourines and singing the following song of welcome:

"The full moon has risen upon us
From the Farewell-Hills.
Thanks are incumbent upon us
So long as a praying person prays to God.
O thou, who hast been provoked among us,
Thou hast brought a command which shall be obeyed."

(23) Some Arab historians mention that while on his way to Medina the Prophet received Buraidah al-Aslamiy, along

with several dozens of the latter's comrades, and that they escorted him with flowing banners and served him as a body-guard (Ibn Kathir, *Bidayah*, 216-7; Maqriziy, *Imta'*, I, 42-3; *Sirah Sha'miyah*). Curiously enough, there is no mention of them at the time of the arrival of the Prophet in Quba, as we have seen, in the outskirts of Medina. The Prophet must have permitted them to return after a few hours' journey in his company.

(24) The Quraishites in Mecca were naturally very much annoyed at his successful escape, and as an immediate reaction confiscated the landed and other properties left behind by the Prophet and other emigrants (*Bukhariy*, 64 : 84, No. 3; *Ibn Hisham*, pp. 321-22, 339; *Mabsut* of Sarakhsiy, Vol. X, p. 52). The persecution of the few poor Muslims still remaining in Mecca was intensified.

The Prophet Muhammad's solution of the refugee problem. Some details of the first written constitution of a State in the world.

(25) The tough time of real action was now beginning.

(26) First, the Prophet caused a fraternization between Meccan refugees and the well-to-do Medinite Ansar of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 344). This solved the problem of how to rehabilitate the uprooted. The principle of the fraternization was that the two contractual brothers should enjoy the property jointly, and the profit of the labours of both should also go to the common funds. So much so, that they inherited from each other to the exclusion of other customary kinsmen (*Tafsir* of Tabariy, under the Qur'anic verse 8 : 75). The Government, too, took notice of the fact, and was careful to enlist only one of the two contractual brothers while selecting volunteers to send on official expeditions, the other remaining at home and taking care of both families.

(27) Thereafter the rights and duties of the ruler and the ruled were promulgated in a precise document, which constituted a federal — and even confederal — City-State in the plain

Utum ad-Dihy'an, a pre-Islamic ruin in Madinah (South)

Madinah, seen from Mount Sal'

(*Jawf*) of Medina, and dealt with social insurance, administration of justice, foreign relations, defence and several other matters of central administration, including the detail of final authority resting with the Prophet Muhammad in case of disputes between individuals (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 341-44 ; Abu 'Ubaid, *Kitab al-Amwal*, § 517 ; *The Islamic Review*, Woking, 1941, August to November). This was followed by a treaty or instrument of accession to the City-State so constituted on the part of the Jewish tribes inhabiting Medina. This treaty with the Jews dealt particularly with questions of military and political significance, and the Jews were also persuaded to acknowledge Muhammad (may peace abide with him !) as their supreme chief and common superior, as has been explicitly mentioned in the document. Like the Arabs of Medina, the Jews, too, were there split into warring factions, and the neutral personality of a third entity, who could administer impartial justice and restore peace and order in the city, was obviously not unwelcome to any of them. It is worth noting that the Jewish groups are mentioned in this document as "Jews of this or that Arab tribe", which fact implies that these Jews had no independent and self-contained existence in Medina, but lived there at sufferance and as proteges of the various Arab tribes there. The treaty with the Jews and the regulation of the Medinite Muslims all were incorporated into a single *Sahifah* which in the words of Wellhausen (*Gemeindeordnung von Medina*) constituted a polity in the anarchic city. Fortunately, this document, the first written constitution of a State in the world, has been preserved *verbatim* and *in toto* by historians and has come down to us intact. This constitution endowed the conglomeration of Medina with a *Haram*, a sacred territory, a preserve, a political entity with definite territory, and a City-State with a constitution elastic enough to serve later greater needs when the city became a metropolis of a vast empire embracing the whole of Arabia in the very lifetime of the Prophet. For this constitution see my book *The First Written-Constitution in the World*, 3rd ed. Ashraf, Lahore, 1975.

The meaning of the word *Haram*

(28) The term *Haram* requires, perhaps, some elucidation. It has a significance half-religious and half-political. We come across it in pre-Islamic days not only in different parts of Arabia but also in Palestine, Greece and elsewhere. From the religious point of view, it signified that everything within its limits should be considered sacred : birds and beasts should not be hunted there ; trees should not be hewn down ; bloodshed should not be allowed ; and the people coming there should on no account be molested in this general refuge, even if they were criminals sought after. Politically, *Haram* meant the determination of the territorial limits of the City-State. (I have contributed a separate monograph on the City-State of Mecca, detailing its political system in the Days of Ignorance, in the quarterly, *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad-Deccan, 1938 ; cf. above note 2 to § 5). The pillars erected to delimit the *Haram* of Mecca are said to date from the days of Abraham (peace be with him !). Anyhow, they existed in pre-Islamic days. On the conquest of Mecca, in the year 8 A. H., the Prophet Muhammad renovated these constructions (cf. Ibn Sa'd, II/i, p. 99 ; al-Azraqiy, *Akhbar Makkah*, p. 357). Ever since they have been repaired whenever necessity arose, and exist upto this day.

(29) In the constitution of the City-State of Medina, under review, Medina too has been declared a *Haram*. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that when Ta'if capitulated in 9 A.H., that city was also recognized as a *Haram*, as has been expressly mentioned in the pact concluded between the Prophet and the people of Ta'if (cf. Abu 'Ubaid, *Kitab al-Amwal*, § 506), and a special proclamation on the part of the Prophet Muhammad provided sanctions against its violation (for texts of both cf. my *Documents sur la Diplomatie Musulmane*, Nos. 160, 161 and *al-Watha'iq*, N° 181-182 ; also *Kanz al-'Ummal*, Vol. II, No. 2132. Many of these documents are also contained in various chapters of my French "*Prophet de l'Islam*").

(30) Had demarcating pillars been erected around Medina

also ? *Al-Bukhariy* precises only this, that the Prophet Muhammad sent a companion of his to erect such pillars on the limits of the city of Medina. General histories and books of Hadith refer to it by saying that the *Haram* of Medina was between the two *Labahs* or *Harrahs*, or else, between Thaur and 'Air. Now, *Labah* is an old Arabic word for lava, or even for the plain strewn with volcanic lava. *Harrah*, on the other hand, means the earth or stones burnt with the heat of the lava spreading around. There are two such plains, extending north-southwise, and the city of Medina is situated in between. Thus they call it Eastern and Western Labah or Harrah, indifferently. Thaur is a small mount in the north of the city, west of Mount Uhud, and 'Air is a bigger mountain in the south of the city.

(31) Al-Matariy, who died in the middle of the 8th century A.H., has written an important history of the city of Medina, *al-Ta'rif bi ma ansat al-Hujrah min Ma'alim dar al-Hijrah* (*MS.* the Shaikh al-Islam Library, Medina), which is constantly referred to by all later authors. He gives greater details, as under :

"It is reported by Ka'b Ibn Malik, who said : The Prophet sent me to erect pillars on the prominences of the sacred territory (*Haram*) of Medina. So, I erected pillars on the prominences of Dhat al-Jaish, on Mushairib, on the prominences of Makhid, on al-Hufayya, on Dhu'l-'Ushairah, and on Taim.

"As to Dhat al-Jaish, it is the mountain path of the hill al-Hufayya, on the Mecca-Medina road. As to Mushairib, it is the mountain to the left of Dhat al-Jaish ; between it and Khalaiq lies ad-Dabu'ah. As to the prominence of Makhid, the mountains of Makhid are on the road to Syria. As to al-Hufayya, it is in al-Ghabah (the forest) north of Medina. As to Dhu 'l-'Ushairah, it is a mountain path in al-Hufayya, and as to Taim, it is a mountain to the east of Medina

"All this seems to be a day's journey in length and as much in breadth. . . .

"Dhat al-Jaish is in the midst of al-Baida', and al-Baida' is the place which faces the pilgrims, who after putting on the pilgrimage-dress (*ihram*) from Dhu 'l-Hulaifah, ascends westwards."

(32) The late learned traveller of Medina, and librarian of the Shaikh al-Islam Library there, Ibrahim Hamdi Kharputli, had told me in 1939 that the ruins of these pillars were still to be found to the east of Medina, and rise about a foot and a half from the ground. As their renovation after the time of the Prophet is never mentioned, these ruins seem to belong to the sacred construction of the holy time of the Prophet Muhammad.

The consolidation of the City-State of Medina by the Prophet Muhammad

(33) After this digression, we revert to the main theme. The first act of the Prophet Muhammad after the migration was to found the bases of a City-State in Medina. As soon as his hands were free, he bestowed his attention on the surrounding territories. A glance at the map of Arabia will show that if the Meccans wanted to go to Syria or Egypt, they had to pass along the coast near Medina. If the tribes inhabiting the territory between Medina and the port of Yanbu' could be rallied, the artery of the Meccan caravan communication could easily be rendered dangerous to use, if not actually barred. These tribes may or may not have been allies of the pre-Islamic Arabs (Ansar) of Medina. Anyhow, the Prophet either contracted new pacts, or revived old ones, with several of these tribes, and included therein articles for military aid (cf. for texts my *Documents sur la Diplomatie Musulmane*, Nos. 140-145, and *al-Watha'iq*, N° 159-164).

(34) Several months passed in organization and preparation. Thereafter small detachments began to be sent from

Medina to harass Quraishite caravans (*Ibn Sa'd*, 2/1, pp. 2-7), and to bring home to them that in order to traverse the territory under Islamic influence, it would be necessary for them to get the good grace of the ruler of Medina, the Prophet Muhammad. The immediate reaction to this on the part of the Quraish was to force the route open. The struggle took the form of several bloody battles. It is an aspect of these very battles, that is, the fields where they were fought, which is our theme in the following pages.

CHAPTER II

Badr-One of the "Ifs" of History

(17th Ramadan 2 H./18th November 623, Friday)

Situation

(35) As the Hijaz, and Western Arabia in general, is a hilly country, valleys and mountain passes are the roads and means of communication; wider valleys are selected by caravans for their route. More difficult to traverse are the mountain passes, and they supplement the valley routes in time of need. In other words, there are always several ways and by-ways between any two places. Badr is no exception to this. The route used in the time of the Prophet Muhammad between Mecca, Badr and Medina has since constantly been altered with changing conditions. When Islam expanded the pilgrims to the holy shrines numbered hundreds of thousands during the season. Before the first world war, caravans of ten to fifteen thousand camels were an ordinary affair. Naturally, camping space, availability of drinking water, and other similar matters must have carried weight in the selection of new halting-places, and it was thus that the *Tariq Sultaniyah* (the Imperial Road) of the Turkish period came into being. Camels, though rarely used by pilgrims nowadays, still ply on this route. With Saudi modernism, motor cars have practically monopolized the Hajj traffic inside the Hijaz. Their needs and requirements are entirely different. The route used by the Prophet in the much-publicized pilgrimage of al-Hudaibiyah differed naturally from that which he himself used at the time of the conquest of Mecca, when his aim was to take the Meccans unawares; and it differed also from the triumphal expedition of the Farewell Pilgrimage, when he addressed the assembly of one hundred and forty thousand disciples. Ibn Hisham and

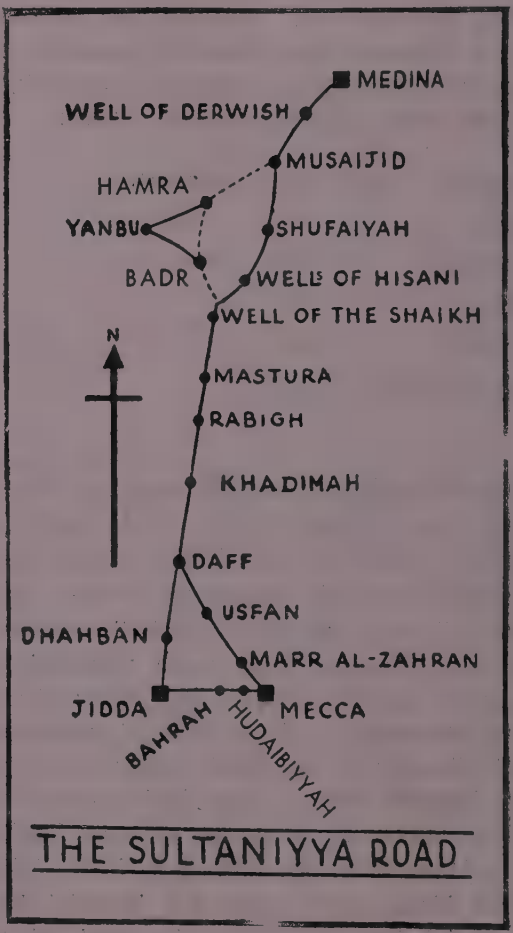
others have noted the names of stations in these various expeditions; but many of them are no more known now.

(36) Unlike the Turkish period, the Saudi government in its early years did not allow pilgrims to visit Badr, owing to its peculiar school of thought. But when the asphalt road, which is constructed, passed through Badr, things have changed; and now everybody has the opportunity, if he desires, to stop there and visit the historic sites. Formerly when there was no motor road, in many places there were sand dunes, so abhorred by automobilists. The new tar road differs only partly from the Imperial Road used by camel caravans (see map). I went with friends from Jiddah to Madinah, and counted from Jiddah about 400 kilometers, as under :

Dahban	at 50	kilometres.
Rabigh	150	,,
Masturah	190	,,
Badr	274	,,
Musaijid	330	,,
Bi'r ar-Rahah	350	,,
Furaish	377	,,

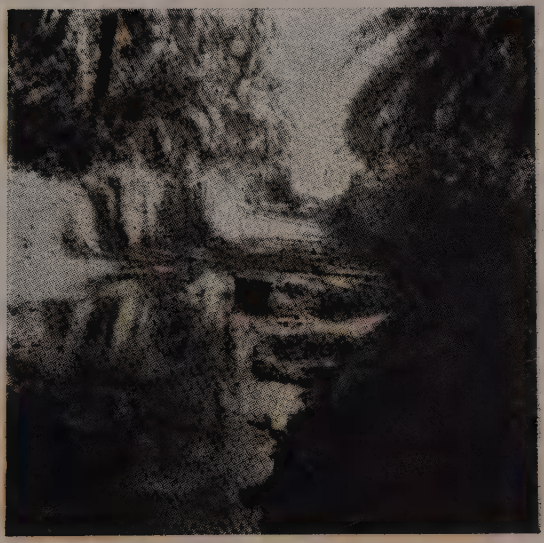
(37) On the Imperial Camel Road of the Tariq Sultaniyah, one coming from Medina turns at Musaijid to go to Badr. Some years ago, the Muslims of Hyderabad, India, donated enough to construct at this important junction several rest-houses for the pilgrims, and their white buildings are a feature of the landscape. Some of them were occupied in 1946 by police, others by a primary school, and many pilgrims passed the night in thatched huts. After Musaijid one passes by Khaif, now a small village, yet its grand mosque and other ruined monuments indicate that it has had its days of grandeur. Thereafter one stops at al-Hamra, a small village. Then passing by al-Haskafiyah, one reaches Badr the following day. Coming from Mecca, one leaves the Imperial Road a little after Bir al-Shaikh (see the map : the well of the Shaikh)

at Darb al-'Ajrah, and reaches Badr after about ten hours' journey on a camel. The route between Badr and Medina is very pleasant, the land being more fertile: there are oases miles long, and especially between Badr and al-Hamra' there is a thick forest, called al-'Is — which may have been the locality al-'Is so often mentioned in the expeditions of the time of the Prophet — and there is plenty of sweet water and pastures for big herds of camels, sheep and goats.

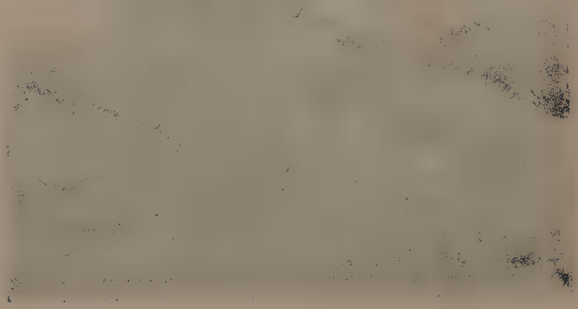


THE SULTANIYYA ROAD

A rock looking like camel's head, near Badr



Spring in Badr



Modern Town of Badr

(38) We need not occupy ourselves with the history of the township of Badr. Nowadays it is a large village. There are several hundred houses built of stone called locally *Qasr*. There are two mosques: one for daily services, having a small minaret (*ma'dhana*) for calling to prayer, requiring repair; the other, indifferently called the Mosque of al-Ghamama, or of al-'Arish, is the cathedral mosque for the weekly Friday service. This is an historic monument, as it is erected on the spot where the Prophet Muhammad had built his observation hut at the time of the Battle of Badr.[1] It is situated on a hillock wherefrom one has a commanding view of the plain below on which the famous battle was fought. Actually, however, the palm-groves of the date-trees and other garden plantations obstruct the view in that direction. The canal, which gradually rises from under the wells to the surface and irrigates the gardens, passes underneath both the mosques, and serves for ablution purposes. The oasis is several miles long, and produces vegetables also. There is a flourishing Friday market, where the Bedouins flock from considerable distances every week and sell or barter away the varied produce of their country, such as melted butter, hides, oil of the elder tree (*bailsan*), livestock (camels, sheep, goats, and occasionally cows), woollen blankets, striped cloaks (*'aba'*), etc. In pre-Islamic days there was also a big annual fair (Tabariy, I, pp. 1307, 1460), which lasted from the first to the eighth of the month of Dhu'l-Qa'da (*Ibn Sad*, Vol. II/i, p. 42). There must also have been an important idol temple. There are, of course, no traces of it now, yet coming from the direction of Bi'r ash-Shaikh, just about a mile before Badr, there is a curious rock resembling a seated camel. In the days of ignorance anything was good enough to be an idol or a fetish; it is possible that

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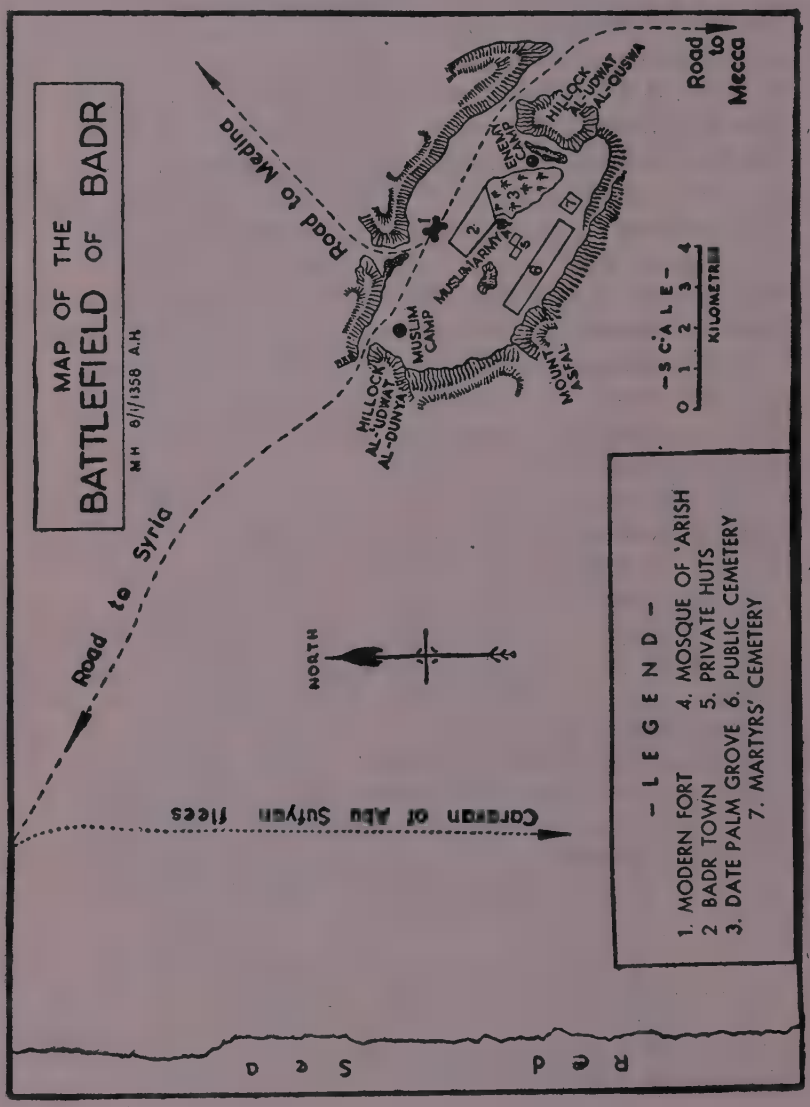
[1] Since the 1953 edition of this book, the old 'Arish mosque has been demolished, and a larger one is constructed below the hill at a distance of about a hundred yards. The new town, electrically lit, has now come to where the map of the battlefield shows the ruins of the Fort. On part of the site of the Fort, I saw a school building.

this too was once worshipped.

Geographical and topographical details

(39) Badr is a plain, oval-shaped, about five and a half miles in length and about four miles in width, surrounded by



high mountains. It lies close to the valley Wadi Safra. Roads to Mecca, Medina and Syria converge here from different directions. During the Turkish regime, the Governor, the Sharif Abd al-Muttalib, had constructed a strong fortress in the midst of this place, but in 1939 it was in a dilapidated condition. As said, later a school building has been erected there. The ground is bestrewn either with pebbles or stones, but in the south-west the earth is soft, and in places driving sand had also accumulated even in the time of the Prophet. On the day of the Battle of Badr it had rained and historians record that as a consequence the Quarishite camp had become a swamp, while the driving sand of the Muslim camp had hardened, to the joy of the Muslims (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 439). The soft earth has now developed into a prosperous oasis.

(40) The mountains around Badr have different names. They include two barren white hills, made of accumulated sand, situated on the two sides of the valley, still called, as in the days of the revelation of the Qur'an, the nearer bank (*al-'Udwat ad-dunya*) and the yonder bank (*ad-Udwat al-quswa*) (cf. The Qur'an, 8 : 42). In between these two there is a high mountain, which is now called Jabal Asfal (literally, *The Mountain Below*), as it was below, that is, behind this mountain that the Quarishite caravan of Abu Sufyan had stopped (cf. The Qur'an, *wa'r-Rakb asfal minkum*, 8 : 42), and having by-passed Badr, the caravan had travelled all along the sea coast and thus escaped the ambush laid down by the Prophet, as we shall see later. Al-Waqidiy says (*al-Maghazi*, MS. British Museum, fol. 30b): "Badr is from the sea coast at the distance of a part of a day's journey". From the summit of Mount Asfal one has a good glimpse of the Red Sea, may be a distance of ten to twelve miles, and surely camels cannot reach there in part of a day. Either the sea has receded or the author, al-Waqidiy, has only surmised.

Causes and background of the battle

(41) On the one hand, the Quarishites had persecuted mercilessly their Meccan co-citizens for embracing the new religion of Islam and forced them to emigrate, confiscated the

property of those who left the city (as mentioned above) and brought political pressure, though in vain, on the ruler and other influential people of the countries of their refuge; Abyssinia first, Medina later (Tabariy, Hist., I, 1603; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 217 ff; the Musnad of Ibn Hanbal, Vol. IV, p. 198; Ibn Habib *Muhabbar*, pp. 271-3), for extradition or repatriation. On the other hand, the Muslims were retaliating, from Medina after the migration, by bringing economic pressure and banning the passage of the Quarishite caravans from the territory under their control or influence on pain of plunder. These were sufficient causes to provoke aggressive war on the part of the Quraish.

(42) The attacks on Quraishite caravans should not be considered as simple pillage. Neither were the Quraishites innocent nor the attackers private bands; a state of war was existing between two City States, and the right of belligerence includes damage to life, property and other interests of the enemy.

(43) It is for this reason that I do not agree with those timid apologetics who try to find arguments for denying outright the very existence of the expeditions sent to harass and loot the Quraishite caravans. The late Professor Shibli, a famous Indian biographer of the Prophet Muhammad, has no doubt strengthened his position, at least as far as Badr is concerned by referring to the very high contemporary evidence of the Qur'an (8 :6) : "As if they were being driven to death visible"; and maintaining that the Prophet had left not for attacking the commercial caravan, but for opposing the Quraishite armed escort or contingent. Still, the very next verse of the Qur'an (8 : 7) reads: "And when He promised you one of the two bands that it should be yours, and ye longed that other than the armed one be yours"; and is clear enough to show that at the time the Muslims were not at all sure which of the two they would encounter, the caravan or the armed detachment. The chances were equal. The caravan consisted of a thousand camels and carried merchandise worth half a million drachmas (Ibn Sa'd, II/i, p. 25; the *Maghazi* by al-Waqidiy, fol. 8a), the caravan had learnt that already at the

Musaijid, with Caravansaray of Nizamat-jung of Hyderabad–Deccan

Village of Khaif, near Badr

time of its outward journey the Muslims had persued it (ibid, fol. 8b); and the Muslims were sure that the Meccans would leave no stone unturned to protect their caravan by mustering all the volunteer forces of their own as well as of their allies. Thus to go very far from Medina in the direction of Mecca appeared naturally to many as to be "driven to the mouth of death". They were not afraid of death. Their enthusiasm was such that, when the Prophet rejected 'Umair, a volunteer, as too young, the boy burst into such cries that the Prophet was forced to allow him to join. The boy's joy was unbounded, and his elder brother Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas, helped him to put on his war kit (*Kanz al-'Ummal*, Vol. V, pp. 53-57 No. 5375).

(44) The caravan coming from Syria could have been stopped by the Muslims west or even north, of Medina. But in spite of the special spies sent by the Prophet to Syria, in the track of the caravan on its outward journey, in order to keep Medina informed of the movements of the homeward journey of the caravan (*Ibn Sad*, Vol. II/i, p. 6), there were no telegraph or other rapid means of communication in those days, information of a camel-caravan could be given by camel-riders only, and could reach Medina at the earliest only a couple of days or so in advance and mobilization and march and search would also take several days even when the detachment dashed directly towards the coast in the west. Certainly a big caravan of a commercial nature was less mobile than a military detachment, yet the guides changed their routes between two stations at randum; and to be on the safe side it was decided to move towards the south, in the direction of Mecca, to stop the caravan coming from Syria, which is in the north. There may have been other considerations; people in the south were already friendly and allies; not so in the north, and hence the former could be a help instead of a hindrance in stopping a caravan, whose stay is always a source of considerable income to the local population. The terrain of Badr may also have been a recommendation for opportunities of hiding and laying ambush.

(45) It was the fasting month of Ramadan, and during the day-time the sun was very hot. After one or two days' march, the Prophet ordered his people to break their fast for the duration of the travel. When leaving Medina, a deputy was appointed to dispose of official business; Muslim volunteers of different origins formed themselves under their respective banners; and Qais al-Maziniy, of the Ansarites, was the commander of the important rear guard (*Tabariy*, I, 1299). An incident of military importance to note : it is recorded that *en route* to Badr (as also later during the expedition of the conquest of Mecca), the Prophet ordered that bells hung on the necks of camels, etc., should be removed, apparently as a precautionary measure for concealing, during the night marches, the army on the move (*Imta'* by Maqriziy, Vol. I, p. 38).

(46) Badr was near the sea coast. It was a big station and caravans generally visited it, and the routes to Syria, Mecca and Medina also converged at this junction. In spite of all this the Prophet could not reach Badr more than a few hours in advance of the expected arrival of the caravan.

(47) The Prophet must have come by an unknown route, as usual. On his way he constantly sent scouts (*Tabariy*, I, 1299, 1303), and sometimes he himself did duty by leaving his troops and wandering in the valleys with one or two companions, sometimes with success and sometimes without. It was in one such wandering that he got some important news about the enemy from a Damrah Bedouin (*Ibn Kathir*, Vol. III, 364; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 435 ; *Tabariy*, I, 1302). The scouts sent on camels from the neighbourhood of Badr (*Tabariy*, I, 1305; *Ibn Sad*, Vol. II/i, p. 16) had penetrated into the very township of Badr, as if for drinking water from the well. They overheard two girls talking about the imminent arrival of the caravan and how one of them would repay the debt of the other from her earnings in connection with services to be rendered to the caravan. This was enough, and they dashed back to the camp, where it was decided to lay ambush for the caravan when it would be entering Badr from the narrow mountain

pass in the north.

(48) As we have seen, the caravan had learnt that on its outward journey, Muslims had vainly pursued it, even as six or seven other Meccan caravans previously. It was apprehensive in this danger zone of Muslim influence. Incidentally we may mention that in pre-Islamic days the tribes of Ghifar were notorious for pillaging even the sacred camels of pilgrims, and they also lived in the territory of Badr (cf. *Abu Dharr Ghifariy* by Manazir Ahsan Gilani, 2nd Edition, Karachi, p. 18, citing *Ibn Hajar*); and Abu Dharr al-Ghifariy, who had embraced Islam in Mecca at an early date, had been posted by the Prophet several years before to preach Islam in this locality (*idem*, pp. 75-84, citing *Muslim*, etc). We may conjecture that the energies of some of the converts could well have been directed in other, yet similar, channels of harassing the enemies of their new religion, to the woe of the Quraishite caravans. Naturally Abu Sufyan, the leader of the caravan, was apprehensive. So he bade a halt at the turn Badr-Hunain (al-Sha'miy, *Sirah*) and set out by himself to see if Badr was a safe place to stay in or cross. The sun was hot and the camels travelled by night only and camped during the day. It must have been very early in the morning that Abu Sufyan arrived at Badr, and it is by the well that there are always people to talk to. Abu Sufyan was an important person, and probably on learning of his arrival the Juhainite chieftain, Majdiy Ibn 'Amr, must have come out of his tent to meet and greet him (*Ibn Kathir*, Vol. III, p. 265). Majdiy lived near Yanbu', and his presence in Badr shows what importance he attached to the big caravan that was passing. Anyhow, these people of Badr had as yet no news of the Muslim army, and Majdiy told Abu Sufyan that, with the exception of the two camel-riders, who had just alighted at the well for drinking water, nothing suspicious had come to his knowledge. Abu Sufyan hurried to where the Muslim camel-riders had alighted, and following the footprints came to a place where there was fresh dung. He took a ball in his hand, broke it open, and on seeing date stones inside, exclaimed,

"By God ! these are camels from Medina, as this cannot be the fodder of the local grazing camels, and surely these are the camels of Muhammad!" Thereupon he hastened back to where the caravan was waiting, despatched a message to Mecca for succour by a fast camel-rider, changed the route of the caravan, and instead of coming to Badr, continued on the sea coast and made a two-night journey at a stretch, and thus escaped from the Muslim onslaught, reaching Mecca safely (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 437). On the way he despatched another emissary to Mecca saying he needed no more protection.

(49) On the arrival of the first messenger at Mecca, who in the traditional manner climbed a hill-top completely naked and announced the evil news, this naturally caused umbrage and indignation, for there was not a single house in Mecca which had not got some proprietary interest or other in the caravan merchandise. They could not make long preparations, did not even wait for the arrival of their allies, the neighbouring Ahabish — which they later regretted — and with a thousand volunteers, including a hundred horsemen, immediately set out for Badr. They did not cancel the programme even on arrival of the second emissary of Abu Sufyan regarding the safety of the caravan. This shows that the route of the two, the caravan and the armed detachment, was not the same since the two are not reported to have met half-way. The continued rush to Badr was meant probably to try to eradicate the menace once and for all.

(50) This Meccan force must have taken at least a week to reach Badr. It may be asked, why did the Prophet Muhammad continue to stay in Badr so long even after the escape of the caravan, and not return to Medina, his base and stronghold ? It may be suggested that he wanted to utilize the opportunity of this journey in order to contact local tribes and to conclude pacts of friendship and alliance if possible, and thus extend his sphere of influence on the territory through which the Meccan caravans passed to and from Syria. A branch of the Juhainite tribe was already rallied in the

Grave Yard of the Martyrs of Badr

Badr on the mouth of the Pass to Madinah

year 1 A. H., and history records (cf. my *Documents*) other alliances of the Banu Damrah, the Banu Mudlij, the Banu Zur'ah and the Banu ar-Rab'ah in the year 2 A.H. some of which may have been concluded at this time. All these tribes lived between the Red Sea and Badr, the region through which the Meccan route to Syria passed.

(51) Be that as it may, when the Prophet Muhammad was expecting to meet the caravan, he waited somewhere around the northern pass, and probably continued to stay there even afterwards. But when he received the news that the Meccan army was coming in great numbers, he decided to oppose it. Some of his officers knew the terrain better, and on their advice the Prophet moved to the south and tried to dominate the water supply there so that the enemy would be deprived of it (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 439).

(52) The Meccan Quraishites had come with musical instruments and were in triumphal vein. The Muslims were short of everything, even transport, two to three persons sharing one camel. Yet their morale could be gauged from the following incident : a Yamanite, Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yaman, narrates : " I was not prevented from taking part in the Battle of Badr on the side of the Prophet except for the fact that when my father and I embraced Islam and passed through Mecca *en route*, we were detained by the Meccans. They suspected that we had embraced Islam and that we would take part in the war ahead. We assured them that we were going to Medina on our private vocations, and had no intention of joining the forces of Muhammad; on our taking oath they released us. We came to Badr and narrated the incident to the Prophet. He asked us to go to Medina and carry out the pledge and said: "God will help us against the Quraishites" (*Kanz al-'Ummal*, Vol. V, No. 5348).

(53) Again, on arrival inside Badr, the Prophet roamed over the plain along with some of his officers, and confidently showed them the spot where the enemy chiefs would fall dead

(*Tabariy*, I, 1288; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 435, etc.). Leaving the question of miraculous prediction the Prophet must have guessed the appointment of various enemy chiefs according to their talents and capacities for various flanks and posts and arranged his own defences accordingly. History tells us that he took particular pains to find out the names of prominent chiefs who had come along with the enemy forces (*Tabariy*, p. 1304).

(54) As battles generally began early in the morning, a site was selected by the Prophet for massing the Muslim army in such a way that if and when the enemy advanced for battle, the rising sun would not shine in the eyes of the Muslims (the *Maghazi* of al-Waqidiy, fol. 15a).

(55) Details of the terrain of Badr, as given by ancient historians, are not clear in all respects. It is possible that some physical changes have occurred during the last fourteen hundred odd years regarding, for instance, the water-course mentioned by them. However, actually there is an aqueduct, a sort of subterranean canal which flows from the town towards the 'Arish hill and thence towards the oasis, gradually rising in level until at a distance of about thirty feet from the mosque of the 'Arish it flows on the surface of the ground. As the mosque of al-'Arish is on the hill, it requires naturally some digging to utilize this aqueduct for its ablution cistern.

(56) Probably the Prophet had moved from the "Nearer Bank" of the valley at the arrival of the enemy, and camped somewhere in the neighbourhood of the hill of al-'Arish. In order to cut the water from the enemy, who camped further to the south on the "Yonder Bank" of the valley, several big pits were dug and the water diverted to them not only to prevent it from flowing towards the enemy camp but also to store it and make it more readily available to the Muslims. It is reported that the Prophet lived in Badr in a "red tent" (*Kanz al-'Ummal*. Vol. V. No. 5256; see in general Mrs. Emel Esin, *al-Qubbah at-Turkiyah*, in: Atti del III Congresso di Studi Arabi

e Islamici, Ravello 1966, ed. Naples 1967, p. 281-313, with numerous illustrations.)

Story of the battle

(57) Muslim volunteers were just over three hundred, and had two or three horses (*Ibn Sa'd*, Vol. II/i, pp. 6-7, 12, 15; *Tabariy*, I, 1298, 1304). The intelligence service had learned from some enemy water carriers captured by Muslim patrols that the enemy numbered between nine hundred and one thousand (*Ibn Sa'd* Vol, II/i, p. 9, Tabariy, *Ta'rikh*, I, 1304). They had also one hundred horsemen, according to the same authority (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 15). Without superior marshalling and generalship, this unequal struggle could not have lasted long. According to at-Tirmidhiy (cf. § *Abwab al jihad*), arrangements for the deployment of the Muslim army were already finalized during the night previous to the battle. Early in the morning the Prophet arranged his small army in files and lines, and inspected them carefully to see if they were "as straight as an arrow". He had a baton in his hand, and wherever he found the volunteers not falling in a perfect line, he pushed them with his baton backward or pulled them forward (*Tabariy*, I, 1319; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 444). After that he nominated a commander for each flank. According to al-Waqidiy (*Maghazi*, fol. 15b), Abu Bakr was the commander of the right wing. But it is rather doubtful as Abu Bakr is reported by other chroniclers to have stayed all the time in the company of the Prophet in the observation hut. There is, however, a report, on the authority of 'Aliy, that on the day of Badr people took shelter behind the Prophet for he was the most valiant soldier on that occasion (the *Sahih* of Muslim, 32/79). The Muslims were divided into three main groups : the Meccan migrants, the Awsites, and the Khazarajites from among the Medinites, each under a separate banner (*Tabariy*. I, 1297). Accordingly three watchwords for the day were also recorded (Baladhuriy, *Ansab*, I, 293; *Ibn Kathir*, Vol. III, p. 274). But as they did not number equally, it is probable that they were deployed in some divisions other than purely tribal ones.

The instructions by the Prophet to his army

(58) After the arrangement of rank and file, the Prophet gave some important instructions to his men, who were the last batch on the surface of the earth who worshipped One God in the idolatrous and atheistic world of those days, and as the Prophet himself put it in his prayer on that day: "O God Almighty! help them; for if they are annihilated, Thou shalt no more be worshipped in future" (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 444). The enthusiasm of the idealistic Muslims must have been unbounded at the hearing of these compliments. The practical instructions, given by the Prophet, said: "Do not move to break your lines but stay on; do not commence fighting until I order; do not waste your arrows while the enemy is still beyond reach, discharge your arrows only when the target is within reach; when the enemy approaches, begin to throw stones with your hands; on his nearer approach use lances and spears, the sword being drawn only finally for hand-to-hand fighting" (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 443; *Bukhariy*, *Abu Dawud*, etc., cited by the *Mishkat*, *Kanz-al'Ummal*, Vol. 5, No. 5350, gives more details of these instructions). Every Muslim must have collected around him stones, the grenades of those days, in considerable number. That was practical only for the Muslims, who were staying on the defensive: the enemy, on the offensive, could not, even had they wished, have carried more than one or two stones each as they advanced from their base.

(59) The famous dictum of the Prophet: "God has prescribed to behave well in every matter; so, even when you kill, kill in a nice way", has a moral and an aesthetic value of no mean order (the *Sahih* of Muslim, 34/57). It was enjoined probably at this very occasion of Badr the first battle in which the Prophet of Islam personally took part. Unnecessarily torturous ways of killing, and the killing of women and children and those of the enemy personnel who do not actually fight, such as cooks, personal servants and the like, are expressly prohibited.

Red Sea, seen from Jabal Asfal (Badr)

Badr in 1939

(60) The Qur'an enjoins, in this connection of Badr, an interesting method of combat, and says (8 : 12) "and smite them each joint". It was to render the enemy unable to fight any longer yet not necessarily fatal. In a hand-to-hand fight this would diminish bloodshed as much as possible, without defeating the purpose of war.

(61) There was as yet no uniform dress among the Muslims, much less among the non-Muslims. So friends were generally distinguished from foes by the use of watchwords shouted on both sides at each single combat. According to al-Waqidiy (the *Maghazi*, fol. 6a): "O victorious, slay" (*ya mansur amit*) was the general watchword. According to *Ibn Kathir* (Vol. III, p. 274). "One God, One God" (*Ahad, Ahad*) was the general phrase together with several others to wit, "O cavalry of God" for horsemen, *"O Banu Abd ar-Rahman"* for Meccan migrants, *"O Banu Abdullah"* for the Khazrajites, and *"O Banu Ubaidallah"* for the Awsites. These needed not be secret, since not only during night guard, but even during hand to hand fight in full day light these watchwords (*shi'ar*) were to be used to distinguish one from one's enemy. Be that as it may, the essential is to point out how friends were distinguished from the enemy in the fury of battle. Yet already there was a tendency to have uniform dress. The verses of the Qur'an revealed in connection with the Battle of Badr refer to "marking angles" (3 : 125). Commenting on this verse, at-Tabariy in his *Tafsir* records that the Prophet had ordered on that occasion, "O Muslims, the angels God has sent for your help have distinctive marks : so have you also distinctive marks". And the author adds, " . . those who could improvise put at once crests of wool on their helmets and caps" (the *Tafsir* by Tabariy, under verse 3 : 125; *Kanz al-'Ummal*, Vol. V, No. 5349, etc).

(62) Not much is known of the enemy formation. According to al-Waqidiy (the *Maghazi*, fol. 15b), they had only two flanks, right and left. Yet according to the same source the army had curiously enough three banners. When advancing,

they halted at a certain distance and, as usual in those days, challenged to individual combat (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 443ff).

(63) The Prophet had spent the whole of the previous night in prayer to God. Now satisfied with the formation and other arrangements of his small army, he, along with his immediate "staff", mounted a hill from whence he had a commanding view of the field of battle. A hut had been constructed there with his permission, the famous *arish*, partly to protect him from the hot sun, and partly from stray enemy arrows. Some fast dromedaries were also posted there (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 439-40). Certainly the chief commander could utilize them to send out orders to his various commanders from time to time; and they could also serve for the escape of the high command if the battle ended unexpectedly. The route to Medina was open from this observation post. According to *at-Tabariy* (I, 1322) there was also a picked guard posted at this hut, *'arish*. The hill 'Arish now takes its name from this hut itself.

Arish and graveyard visited

(64) In later times this hut of the Prophet was commemorated by a mosque, which replaced it. In 1939 there was a cathedral mosque, though small, on the spot. It had three inscriptions, all in Arabic, one on the wall above the pulpit (*minbar*), another above the niche (*mihrab*), and the last stone was on the ground near the niche. This condition of the last inscription dated probably from some recent repair and restoration. The walls were covered with mud, and I could not discover if there were bricks or stones inside. The basement, however, was of stones.

(65) The inscription above the pulpit contains the name of Khush-Qadam, a Turco-Egyptian officer of the Mamluk dynasty. As every line has one or more orthographical mistakes, they may emanate from the self-same non-Arabs. I have given the text in my *'Ahd Nabawi Ke Maidan Jang*, and here I content

myself only with its translation :

Line 1: "With the name of God, the most-Merciful, the All-Merciful.

Line 2: "The erection of the enclosure of this sacred place was undertaken.

Line 3: "By Khush-Qadam, decurion of the Egyptian State and constructor of the State building.

Line 4: "The completion of this auspicious building was achieved on 21 Rabi al-awwal in the year 906.

After the Saudi demolition of the old mosque, I do not know what has become of these old historic inscriptions.

(66) So it is from the early tenth century of the Hegira. The other above the niche is inscribed in the Tughra style, and I was unable to decipher it, nor was there enough light to photograph it. However, this much can be recorded : it is in marble, and about eight inches square. The third inscription is on a small piece of sandstone, in very bad, yet orthographically more correct, handwriting, and it also speaks of a reconstruction, as the words *Kana'l-faragh* would indicate.

(67) The graveyard of the martyrs is enclosed in a special cemetery. During the Ottoman regime, marble pillars and inscriptions with exquisite workmanship were erected to make it a most beautiful edifice. Now there remains nothing but broken pieces of marble here and there. The whole thing is a parthetic ruin. Near-by some old inscriptions are still readable on a small rock.

(68) The guides also say that the battle raged on the very spot where the graveyard of the martyrs now exists. This may well be true on account of the famous dictum of the Prophet: "Bury the martyrs where they fall !"

(69) The result of the battle is well known. It was all

over in a few hours. Fourteen Muslims lost their lives, but not before killing as many as seventy of their opponents and also capturing another seventy (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 506-513). The prisoners were also treated in an exemplary manner in spite of the fact that the Muslims had least to favour them. The Prophet distributed them among his soldiery for safe custody, and enjoined them expressly to treat them well (*Bukhariy*, 56 : 42). The command did not remain unheeded; those of the prisoners who had no clothes were provided with dress, and they were fed on a par with the Muslims. Some of the Muslims fed them with their bread and contented themselves with mere dates in view of the good treatment enjoined (*Tabariy*, I, 1337, *Ibn Hisham*, pp. 459-60). According to the Qur'an (76/8-9), feeding the prisoners is to be gratis.

(70) There was no uniform treatment of prisoners of war in pre-Islamic Arabia: sometimes they were killed sometimes enslaved, particularly women and young children, and sometimes liberated gratis or on payment of ransom or in exchange for somebody in the hands of the enemy. Ransom was in vogue in Islam even from pre-Badr days. Now, after marching for one or two days towards Medina and entering Islamic territory, the Prophet held a council, and in spite of tempting reasons to kill them all, it was decided to liberate them on payment of ransom. Four thousand drachmas was fixed as the rate for ordinary prisoners (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 462). Even the relatives of the Prophet were not exempted. 'Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, certainly deserved better, for he used always to serve in Mecca as a secret agent of Islam, and constantly kept the Prophet informed of the local news. Yet he too had to pay. A cousin of the Prophet, Naufal Ibn al-Harith Ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, who was an armament merchant, was asked to supply one thousand spears as his ransom (Ibn Hajar, *Isabah*, No. 8336). Another tradition relates that the prisoners of Arab origin were charged with forty ounces of silver (each ounce weighing forty dirham), yet the prisoners of non-Arab origin (Negroes) were charged only half as much (*Kanz al-'Ummal*, Vol. V, No. 5367). In spite of all this, what a pleasant

'Arish Mosque (1939)

New Saudi Mosque substituting the 'Arish Mosque (1964)

shock to learn that the Prophet asked the literate among the prisoners only to teach ten Muslim boys each how to read and write, and this would be their ransom (*Ibn Sa'd*, Vol. II/i, pp. 14,17 ; *Ibn Hanbal*, Vol. I, p. 246). A few were released for their poverty on promising not to come to fight Muslims in future (*Tabariy*, I, 1342-54 ; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 471). There was enough booty (*Ibn Sa'd*, Vol. II/i, p. 13), so the prisoners were not required to march on foot to Medina on the four-day journey.

(71) All the dead, both Muslim and enemy, were given burial. Mutilation or any other dishonour to the enemy dead was strictly prohibited.

(72) The Prophet sent at once two messengers on fast camels to Medina, one to 'Aliyah, the high town, and one to Safilah, the low town, to take the good tidings of the great victory (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 457). For many it was in fact too good to be true.

(72/a) Returning to Madinah, there occured an incident of human interest: Samhudiy (2nd ed., p. 1246) records that a cunning prisoner of war, Suhail ibn 'Amr en route (apparently while traversing a hilly region) told his Muslim guardian to let him go for a natural need. As soon as he was out of the sight of the guardian, he tried to escape. Later he was recaptured, but the Prophet did not punish him for this ruse and military crime. (Later he became one of the most sincere Muslims).

(73) The entry of the triumphant army need not detain us. The rejoicing must have been sober yet very great.

(74) International reaction was also not lacking. It is related that when news of the Muslim victory reached the Negus of Abyssinia through some travellers, he rejoiced greatly, so amicable were his relations with the Prophet owing to the behaviour of Muslim refugees there, who were the ambassadors of their State and their faith (*Ibn Kathir*, Vol. III, p. 307).

Probably this is part of the same narration recorded by ash-Sha'miy (in his *Sirah*, § Badr) which reports that after the defeat of Badr, the Meccans sent two emissaries to Abyssinia in order to ask the Negus to extradite the Muslim refugees in his territory. On learning the move, probably through his secret agent in Mecca, the Prophet, too, sent a special envoy, 'Amr Ibn Umaiyah (of the tribe of Damrah), who had not yet embraced Islam, to Abyssinia in order to counter the mischievous move of the Quraishites. As is well known, the Negus denied the Meccans their request for the extradition of the Muslims (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 716 ff).

CHAPTER III

UHUD

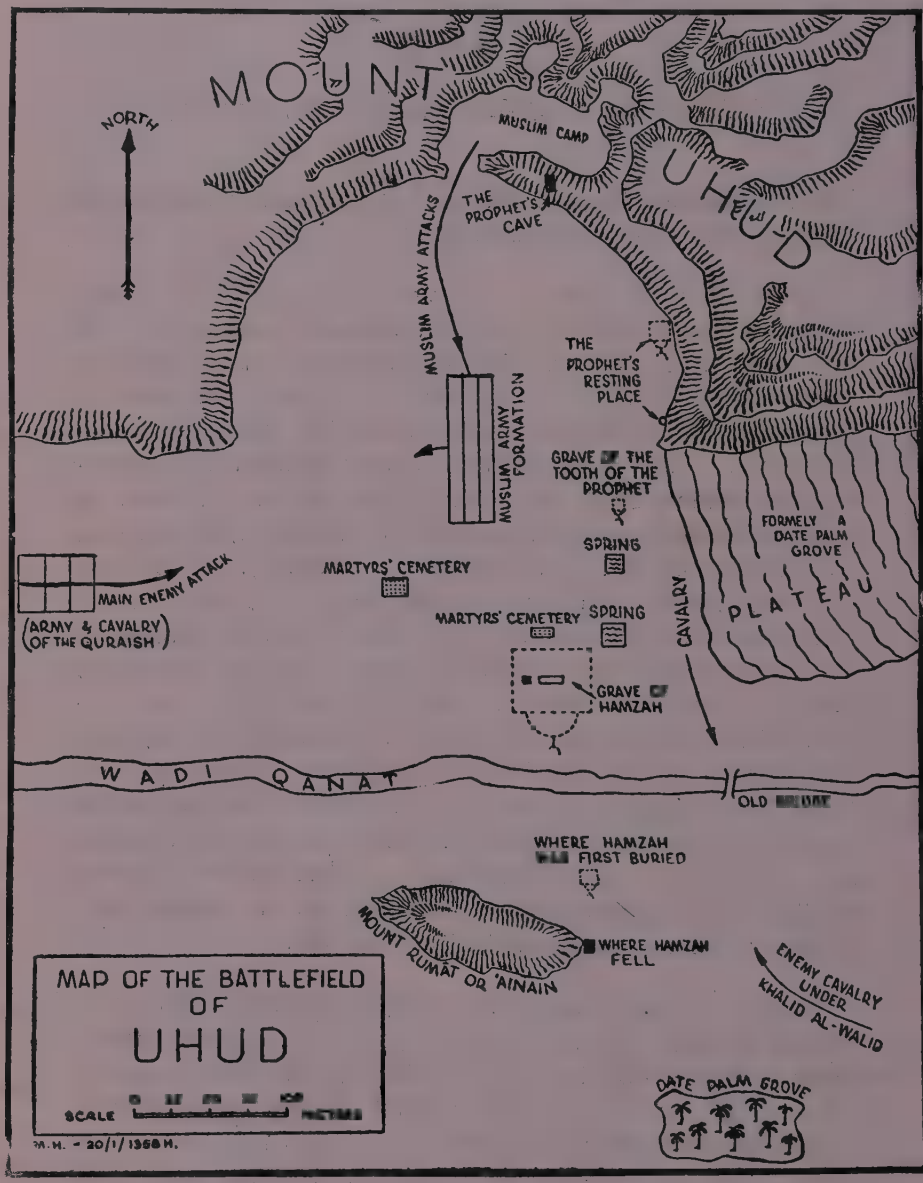
(7th Shauwal 3 H./24th December 624, Monday)

The Quraish of Mecca make preparations for attack on Medina after their defeat at Badr

(75) The importance of the overland route to Syria and Egypt was too great for the Quraish of Mecca to abandon it at their first reverse at Badr. They did not find it an extravagance to collect contributions of a quarter of a million *dirhams* towards preparation for a retaliatory expedition (*Sirah* of ash-Sha'miy, ch. Uhud). They further spent practically as much in ransoming their seventy comrades taken prisoner by the Muslims at Badr. Each prisoner had to pay at an average 4,000 *dirhams* as ransom money. *Ibn Hisham* (p. 555 ff), *ash-Sha'miy* (ch. Uhud), and others have recorded that the Quraishites did not content themselves with their local voluntary militia, or even with the contingent of their perpetual though mercenary, allies of the tribe of Ahabish. They sent important personalities, such as 'Amr Ibn al-'As, Abdallah Ibn az-Ziba'ra, Hubairah Ibn Wahb, Musafi' Ibn 'Abd Manaf, Abu 'Azzah 'Amr Ibn 'Abdallah al-Jumahiy, to tour through all the tribes of Arabia and explain to them the new peril that was arising with Islam, and ask them to join forces in a "police action" against Medina. The mission was successful to a degree that "throngs of Bedouins assembled" for the task.

(76) The secret agent of the Prophet at Mecca, his uncle 'Abbas, in spite of his being charged with ransom money when he was taken prisoner at Badr along with other Meccans, did not fail to inform the Prophet of the developments in time, by the agency of a Bedouin of the Ghifar tribe (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i p. 25; *ash-Sha'miy, in loco*). Medina, was thus

prepared when the enemy advanced in the month of Shauwal of the year 3 A.H. (December 624 C.E.). The Quraish and their allies camped near Mount Uhud, north of the city of Medina.



Mount Uhud

(77) Uhud is a mountain due north of Medina, about three miles from the centre of the city. The Quraishites came from Mecca, which, as everybody can see, lies far in the south of Medina. I was for long intrigued why the Meccan invaders, coming from the south, did not halt to the south of Medina in order to launch the attack on the city of the Prophet Muhammad, but marched on still further, by-passed Medina and camped to the north of the city, thus cutting their own way of retreat and reinforcement. I asked many a savant, local as well as foreign and when nobody could satisfy me, I reluctantly concluded that the present Uhud must not have been the original Uhud where the famous battle was fought: the genuine Uhud must lie somewhere in the neighbourhood of Quba, now forgotten. The unanimous assurance of classical as well as modern historians and geographers, even the tomb of Hamzah, the martyr *par excellence* of Uhud reputation, could not move me to conclude otherwise.

(78) Yet, when I got the opportunity of visiting the site and studying the terrain, I understood what the turning of pages of scores of books for years past and talking to or corresponding with savants of unrivalled erudition could not explain to me.

The location of Medina and what it looked like during the days of the Prophet Muhammad

(79) The fact is, Medina is situated in a lava plain, about ten miles long and as wide. This was originally called the plain (*Jawf*) of Medina, and later renamed "Haram" or sanctuary by the Prophet. This plain is surrounded on all sides by chains of high mountains, and communications are maintained through narrow valleys. This plain, "between 'Air and Thaur" of the classical writers, is also not an even one: in between lie the majestic Mount Sal' and several other smaller hills of considerable strategic value.

(80) In the time of the Prophet, Medina was not a city as its layout makes it today. It had not the congested streets and localities of modern towns On the other hand, there lived in Medina in those days several Arab and Jewish tribes, and the locality or village of each tribe was separated from others, and lay at a distance of one, two or more furlongs from each other. A chain of such villages was to be seen from Mount 'Air right up to Mount Thaur. (see map in ch. 4 below)

(81) These tribal villages each possessed one or more water wells, and the dwelling houses were constructed of stone and were generally double storied. Every village possessed several strong towers, called indifferently *Utum* or *ujum*. In time of war, women, children, cattle and other movable goods were removed to them for safety. At one time there were more than one hundred such towers in the city, and the Banu Zaid alone possessed fourteen of them (*Diwan* of Qais Ibn al-Khatim, ed. Kowalski, p. XVIII). Some of them were very big. So the Utum ad-Dihyan, belonging to Uhaihah Ibn al-Julah, was, according to *Kitab al-Aghani* (XIII, 124) a three-storied building; its ground floor was constructed of the black lava stone, and the two upper storied (*nabarah*) were of stones "white as silver"; and the tower was so high that one could see it from a distance of a day's journey on camel. In the vicinity of Quba, the ruins of this tower were still to be seen in 1947. Its ground floor is preserved, and even in its ruined form gives us an opportunity of seeing a monument of military architecture of pre-Islamic days in Medina. Inside these towers there were often wells, so that in case of prolonged siege, drinking water should not be lacking to the inmates.

(82) Apart from these dispersed and widely separated villages, there were in Medina gardens and farms belonging to individuals in each tribe. Their compound walls were generally built of stones. Such gardens were spread in all directions, in and around Medina.

(83) Among these tribal habitations, one was called

Yathrib. The hamlet is still vaguely remembered, and is shown to have existed on south-west base of Mount Uhud, where water abounds. May be this was the most prosperous, or in some other way most important or even the earliest conglomeration there in pre-Islamic times. Anyhow, it gave its name to the whole town, an appellation of the whole by the name of its part, a phenomenon not seldom come across in other countries. The township of Madinah al-Nabiy, later simply Madinah (Medina), lies in the centre of the municipal area.

(84) The Meccan Quraishites had no particular grudge against the general population of Medina ; they were angry against only one person, their co-citizen, the Prophet Muhammad, who had taken refuge there. To reach the "Madinah of the Prophet", it was necessary to cross thick clusters of trees of numerous gardens, and there was no open space to serve as a battlefield for an army of several thousand on either side. In his *Wafa al-Wafa* (*s.v.* Khandaq), as-Samhudiy quotes from the second century author, Ibn Is'haq, that "one side of Medina was exposed, and the rest of the sides were strongly protected by buildings and date-palm groves through which an enemy could not get access".

The terrain around Medina

(85) Judging from present-day topography of the region of Medina, in the south-east, Quba and 'Awali were thickly populated. In the south-west and south, the lava and extremely uneven hilly terrain was absolutely useless as a fighting ground either for infantry or cavalry. In the east the Jewish villages succeeded one another from Quba to Uhud. In the west also there are plantations and gardens, though not so thickly clustered. The ground is less fertile and the condition could not have been better in those days. The assembly hall of the tribe of the Banu Sa'idah is shown on the northern wall of the modern town, just to the east of the Sha'miy Gate.[1]

[1] Since the 1953 edition of this book the entire city-wall has been demolished for facilitating traffic in the expanding town; and naturally the monument of Banu Sa'idah has also disappeared.

This tribe must have lived there. Beyond the north-eastern Majidi Gate, there are other very old gardens with reminiscences of the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Mid-north, dozens of old wells were recently discovered when ground was being cleared for the construction of the general hospital. A bit farther to the west, on the very Mount Sal' the Banu Haram have left their tribal graveyard, and apparently they lived then in that direction. All along the west, along the river bed of Wadi al-'Aqiq, especially in the north-west, down to the historic well of Bi'r Ru'mah and even further south to the mosque of Two Qiblahs (*Qiblatain*), there are numerous gardens. The Bi'r Ru'mah and the land watered thereby originally belonged to a private person, and Uthman (later the third Caliph) purchased it at the instance of the Prophet and made of it a public bequest, as is well known.

(86) Thus only the far north offers an open space. The white saline earth is unfit for cultivation of any kind, even today. The locality where the Prophet Muhammad lived was more vulnerable from this side than from any other.

(87) As mentioned above, the south of Medina is hilly and full of lava blocks, and communications are maintained there through deep valleys and gorges. The route leading to the city from this direction and passing by Quba is rather difficult, and is reported never to have been used by big caravans. Single individuals scale it rarely, in an emergency only. Apparently the Prophet Muhammad himself had come that way, at the time of migration, for reasons of security; for he came first to Quba, and later moved to the middle town. But the horses and animals of transport of a large army, would not use it. Moreover, the sun was hot at the time of the battle of Uhud, and it rendered the lava too hot even for camels. Camels never like stony ground. Lava plains surround Medina from the south, from the east and the west; only the north is immune from it. Houses were certainly built in the lava plain, apparently as a security measure, yet no plantations are possible there. An army camp required grazing lands which are not

Mount Uhud and the Battlefield

found there. Any army may cross somehow the lava plain yet would not select it for a battle-ground. It is to be remembered that the 'Anbariyah Gate and the road leading thereto from the south is a comparatively recent construction, about three hundred years old. Otherwise, in ancient times, the caravans from the south halted, we are assured, at Dhu'l-Hulaifah, and then entered the bed of Wadi al-'Aqiq, and, leaving Medina to their right, traversed northwards as far as the confluence of the Zaghabah, and then alone turned back to Medina. The soft sand of the river-bed was liked by the camels.

(88) Such were the physical impediments of the terrain, which forced the Meccan army, tired and almost dead after the arduous march of twelve continuous days, to get away from Medina and camp at a safe distance from the enemy and take the much needed rest for men and for animals. In the locality of Zaghabah there is water and grass. The Meccans were sure of their victory, and so they did not worry about the route of their return.

A description of the terrain of Mount Uhud

(89) As mentioned previously Mount Uhud lies to the north of Medina, and stretches in a straight line in an east-westerly direction. It is four to five kilometres in length. Just in the middle portion, facing the town, there is a natural curve, semi-circular or horse-shoe in shape, spacious enough to hold several thousand people. There is another open space further inside, and both of these are connected by a narrow passage. To the south of Uhud flows the Wadi Qanat, to the south of which stands the 'Ainain Hill, also called the "Hill of the Archers" (*Jabal al-Rumat*) on account of the archers posted on it by the Prophet on the day of the battle of Uhud. In the spacious open ground, north of Wadi Qanat, there are two springs. May be, the name of Hill 'Ainain (lit. *two springs*) is due to this fact.[1]

[1] Since the 1973 edition of this book, motor pumps have been installed, and the points where spring water was visible have been displaced, leaving now only dry ponds where they were.

Preparation of the Muslims, who were only 700 strong, to meet the enemy, 3,000 strong.

(90) When the Quraishite army arrived in Dhu 'l-Hulaifah, Muslim spies mingled with the marching hordes, and returned to report to the Prophet Muhammad only when the enemy stopped and encamped at the Zaghabah, west of Uhud (*Istiab* § Anas Ibn Fudalah; the Maghazi of Waqidiy, fol. 49b). The Prophet Muhammad was personally disposed to defend the city from inside "and fight it out in the streets", courting a siege, yet the clamour of the younger officers at last decided him to go out of the city and join battle in the open (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 558). He asked the volunteers to assemble in front of the Twin Towers of Shaikhain,[1] south-east of the Uhud curve. It was there that he inspected the parade, and as usual, rejected the too young or otherwise unfit (*Tabariy*, I, 1390; *Sirah* of ash-Sha'miy *in loco*). There was a considerable number of women volunteers, including 'A'ishah, the youthful wife of the Prophet, who nursed the wounded, brought water for the thirsty and rendered other sundry services, as is described at length by *al-Bukhariy* (56/65-67). Az-Zuhriy reports that the Medinite Muslims asked the Prophet whether they should not ask the Jews, their allies, to help in defence, and the Prophet replied, "We do not require that" (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 559; *Hist.* of Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, p. 14). Other reports say about six hundred Jews of the tribe of Banu Qainuqa', led by the notorious hypocrite Ibn Ubaiy, came to the help of the Prophet, but the Prophet said, "We do not require them; we do not take help of infidels against infidels" (Ibn Sa'd, II/I pp. 27, 34; *Ibn Kathir*, Vol. IV, p. 22). This is rather strange, as the Banu Qainuqa', were already expelled but we shall return to this later (in § 208). Muslim volunteers numbered a thousand in all. Later a gang of about three hundred hypocrites, under the influence of Ibn Ubaiy, deserted at the last moment on a flimsy pretext; and it

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1The place is commemorated now by the Mosque of Shaikhain, which is unique in the vicinity inasmuch as it has a roof with two domes.

was only with seven hundred strong that the Prophet Muhammad went to oppose an enemy more than four times that number. Of these seven hundred, only one hundred had coats of mail (*Sha'miy, in loco.*) According to one report, there were only two horses, one belonging to the Prophet Muhammad and the other to Abu Burdah (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 27). It is not clear whether az-Zubair ibn al-'Auwam, who opposed on horseback the enemy cavalry under Khalid, mounted the horse of the Prophet or had his own, and whether some more horses were not fetched by Muslim volunteers from their homes nearby, on seeing a strong detachment of enemy horses, or even captured from the enemy, and fought under az-Zubair (*Tabariy*, I, 1394ff.)

(91) As to the enemy, the quarter million *dirhams* were not spent uselessly by the Quarishites. There were "paid mercenaries" of whom two thousand belonged to the single tribe of the Ahabish alone. (*Sirah*, by Karamat 'Ali p. 245), besides a considerable number of Bedouins from other tribes. The Quarishites mustered in all 3,000 combatants including 700 with coats of mail and 200 on horses (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 561). The cavalry was posted as right and left wings, under two commanders Khalid and 'Ikrima (ibid).

The Prophet takes up his positions

(92) On the first night, after the arrival of the enemy, when the Prophet Muhammad was still in the city, the township was guarded by patrols as also the house of the Prophet, the whole night (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 26.) After the assembly and inspection near the Twin Towers of Shaikhain, the Prophet spent the night in the open camp, and a guard of fifty strong under Muhammad Ibn Malsamah was entrusted with the task of patrolling around the camp the whole night (*Ibn Kathir*, Vol. IV, p. 27). Next morning the Prophet marched into the curve of mount Uhud and took up his position, making the inner opening as his camp. He decided to fight in the outer curve, and accordingly made his dispositions. He appointed a batch of fifty archers to take up their positions on the 'Ainain Hill,

under 'Abdullah ibn Jubair. These, in co-ordination with the small cavalry under az-Zubair, were entrusted with the task of protecting the passage between Uhud and 'Ainain from being penetrated by the enemy from behind the main Muslim army (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 560).

(93) The Muslim Army filed with faces to the west, wherefrom the enemy was advancing. The archers thus guarded not only the back of the main Muslim army but also the Quraishite passage to the city of Medina. This explains the unusually strict order of the Prophet to the archers of 'Ainain not to leave their post without express orders, "even if the vultures perch on the corpses of the Muslims."

(94) Then the Prophet Muhammad, after finalizing his tour of inspection on horseback, alighted, arranged on foot the rank and file of his small army, and dressed up the right and left flank (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 27). He is reported to have put on a double coat of mail (ibid ; Ibn Hisham, p. 576; *Tabariy*, I, 1393; *Mishkat* citing *Abu Dawud*, ch. Jihad, 75 ; *Ibn Majah*, No. 2806 ; and *al-Bazzaz*). Another report says, he exchanged the coat of mail of Ka'b Ibn Malik with his own one (*Isti'ab*, No. 916), apparently for purposes of disguise and security on the day of battle.

(95) The Quraishites, too, feared a night attack, and a guard under 'Ikrimah patrolled their camp during the night (Ibn Kathir, Vol. IV, p. 27). On the morning of the battle, they advanced with their main infantry as well as half their cavalry of one hundred horses under 'Ikrimah, towards the Prophet. Abu Sufyan was their commander-in-chief. Women with tambourines were inciting them to war and reciting songs of vengeance. The other half of their cavalry, under Khalid Ibn al Walid, was to go round and attack the Muslims from behind.

A conjecture about the then configuration of the 'Ainain Hill

(96) The distance between 'Ainain Hill and Mount Uhud is so great that an enemy cavalry detachment could easily

Archers' Hill (Jabal ar-Rumat or Jabal 'Ainain, in 1939)

penetrate without being touched by the volley of arrows of the Muslim archers on 'Ainain, the Muslim cavalry also was too few to stop the enemy detachment. This difficulty can now be removed only by conjecture. May be the slope at the base of Uhud was not so low thirteen hundred years ago as it is now, owing to numerous inundations of the Wadi Qanat—one of which had washed the tomb of Hamzah and necessitated the removal of his body from the original burying ground to the present one — and to quarrying of stones for building purposes. The Wadi Qanat which is a continuation of the Wadi Wajj of Ta'if, seems liable to great physical changes. In 1939 I did not notice any bridge over it east of 'Ainain Hill, yet in 1947 a very old bridge had come to light there owing to an inundation during the previous years washing away the sand which had submerged the bridge. As to buildings, the huge mosque and tomb of Hamzah, razed to the ground since the departure of the Turks, numerous houses on the very 'Ainain Hill, dozens of government and private houses for police and others in the vicinity of the battlefield would require a considerable quantity of stone and earth. Otherwise, in ancient times the part of the slope between 'Ainain and Uhud must have been so high as to prevent passage of cavalry, which was obliged to cross nearer 'Ainain and thus become a target for the archers. Another possibility is that owing to the presence of two springs of fresh water, there may have been in those days one or more palm groves and gardens, with usual compound walls, occupying part of the passage now open. This is supported by some reports of the battle. Abu Dujanah's incident is well known: how the Prophet Muhammad offered his own sword to the best warrior, how several people, including 'Umar and az-Zubair, were denied the honour, and how Abu Dujanah obtained it on the promise of fighting with it unto death.

(97) Our historians, (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 563; *Tabariy*, p. 1425-6) have recorded an improvised poem of this Abu Dujanah, which he burst forth reciting with joy at the great honour, a couplet of which says:

"I am the person with whom my beloved (Prophet) made a pact

While we were on the foot of the hill near the datepalm grove."

Note the words "date-palm grove" which are used by the poet here.

The action : the tactics and defeat of the enemy in the first phase of the battle.

(98) The Quraishites must have mainly come from the Zaghabah camp to Uhud directly and encountered the Muslims near the present westerly Cemetery of the Martyrs. But how did the cavalry under Khalid come behind the Muslims, east of 'Ainain ? Had they come along with the main army and just separated from it a furlong before the battleground, made a detour and come out on the other side of 'Ainain Hill, there would have been no surprise for the Muslims who could have diverted part of their forces to meet the danger. Many people suppose that there is a passage from behind Mount Uhud, which leads directly into the inner opening where the Prophet Muhammad had camped and which is narrowly separated from the battleground. In 1932 and again in 1939 I wandered for hours and days together and climbed the rocks, and am sure that there is no possibility whatsoever of the entrance of cavalry that way. In 1946-47, I circumambulated the whole mountain, and assured myself that the north of the mount is a solid and high wall and there is no opening whatever to allow for the penetration of man, much less of horse. The only possibility is that the cavalry of Khalid galloped round the mountain from their camp, about ten kilometres, which is certainly not too much for horses, and came in time upon the other side of 'Ainain to try to attack the Muslims from their rear. The march of Khalid from the north of Uhud necessitated not more than about four kilometres in excess of his march, had he come along with the main army group of the Meccans. This is

certainly not too much for a cavalry detachment on important duty. Otherwise it will be impossible to explain why 'Ainain is also called "Hill of the Archers" and that name is not given to some height of Uhud near the narrow passage joining the inner and outer openings in Uhud.

(99) The first phase of the battle ended with the defeat of the Quraishite main army, or rather the vanguard only. The repeated onslaughts of Khalid's cavalry were also successfully repulsed by the archers conjointly with the Muslim horsemen. Everybody then busied himself in plundering whatever booty he could capture (Tabariy, I, 1401). The battle was not yet over when the Muslim archers deserted their post, in spite of the stern warning of their commander forbidding them to take part in the plundering and to think that the battle was over. The commander of the archers was left with only seven or eight men, when the inveterate Khalid attempted again and this time with easy success, to penetrate the battlefield from behind the Muslim army (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 570; *Maqriziy*, I, 128).

(100) The Muslims were not prepared for this attack. They turned round to oppose the formidable charge of enemy horses; and when the retreating Quraishites found that there was no more pursuit, they, too stopped and reformed. The Muslims were taken from two sides, and when an enemy archer shouted that he had killed the Prophet—apparently misled by the change of coat of mail which the Prophet Muhammad had effected— the Muslims despaired and fled in every possible direction (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 570).

(101) Seventy Muslims lost their lives; twenty-three of the enemy were killed (cf *Ibn Hisham*, p. 610), most of them apparently during the first phase of the battle.

The Prophet Muhammad is wounded and defended by his followers

(102) Several minor incidents are to be noted.

(103) During the two days that the Prophet was still in Medina or in the assembly and parade ground, the prospective battlefield was infested by enemy scouts and sappers and miners. A Christian monk of Medina, Abu 'Amir ar-Rahib,[1] had migrated to Mecca and had contributed in inciting the people against the Muslims. He was in the Quraishite army, along with his fifty followers, at Uhud. It is recorded that this monk dug several pits in the prospective battlefield and camouflaged them. It was in one of these that the Prophet fell during the last phase of the battle (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 572).

(104) The ground of Uhud is stony. During the last phase, the enemy resorted to throwing stones upon the fleeing Muslims. If several received wounds in their back, the Prophet was hit in the face. The stone hurt his front teeth, and the iron rings of his coat of mail thrust deeply into his face and held so firmly that, when a companion tried to pull them out with the help of his teeth, he broke his teeth, yet could not extract the rings from the bone of the Prophet (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 571-2.) Later the Prophet Muhammad made ablution for his daily prayer services in bandages for many days (*Sharh as-Siyar al-kabir*, by as-Sarakhsiy, Vol. I, p. 89; or ed. Munajjed, I, 127).

(105) A small band of the faithful bravely defended the Prophet Muhammad till the last, and many of them sacrificed their lives in the noble task. A woman volunteer Umm 'Umarah was also included in this improvised body-guard and her exploits elicited praise and appreciation from the Prophet Muhammad (*Ibn Kathir*, Vol. IV, p. 34; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 573; Baladhuriy; *Ansab*, I, 326).

(106) With the help of some of the faithful, the Prophet Muhammad succeeded in getting out of the pit, dug by the monk Abu 'Amir, in which he had fallen and climbed to a cave in

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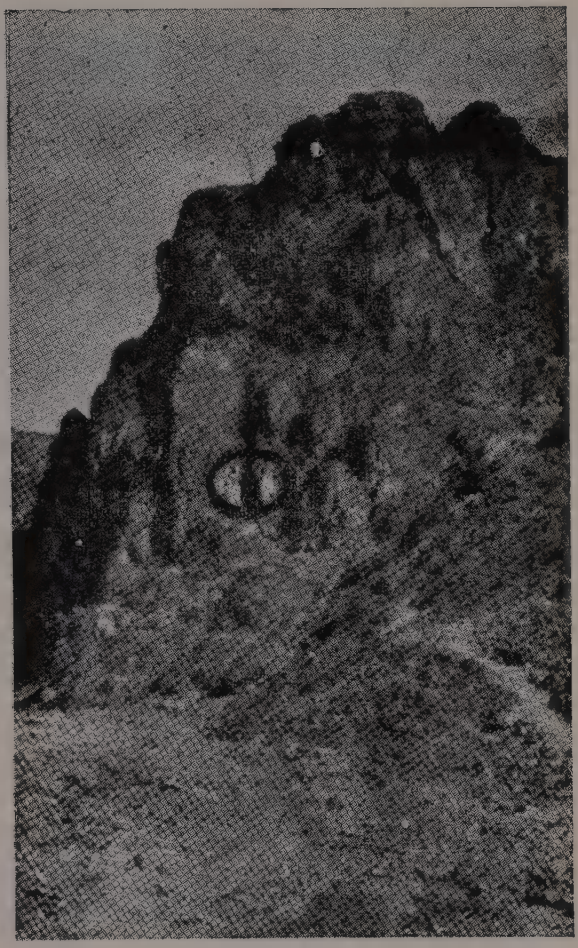
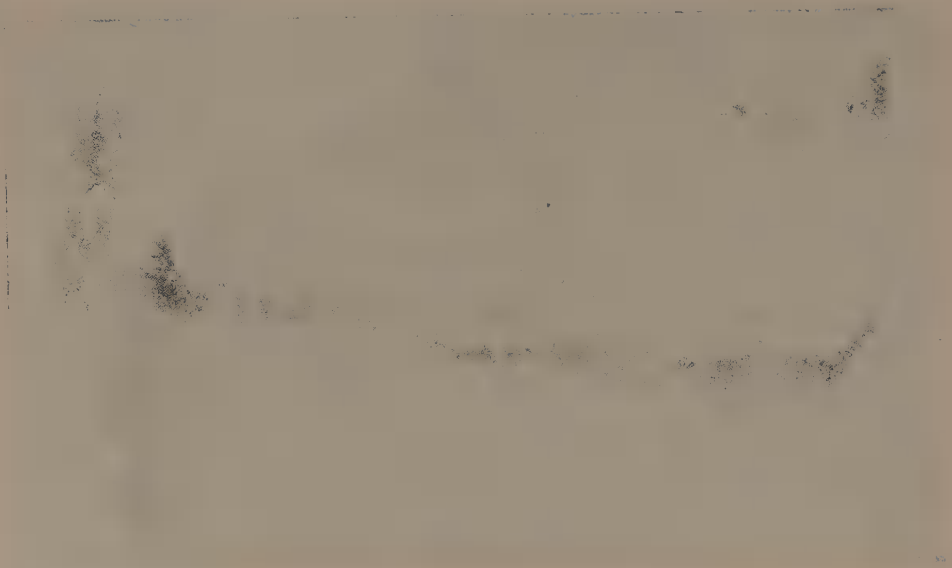
[1] See on him my article "The Christian Monk Abu 'Amir", in: Journal of Pak. Hist. Soc., Karachi, 1959, VII, 231-40.



Cave where the Prophet reposed after being wounded (between white points to the left)



Mount Uhud (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 572, 576). This is on the east side of the outer simi-circular opening in Uhud, and big enough for a man to lie down comfortably; and was also out of reach of enemy missiles.

(107) When the Muslim resistance was broken, the enemy indulged in outrageous rejoicing.. Hind, the wife of their commander-in-chief, Abu Sufyan, cut open the belly of Hamzah's corpse (he was an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad), took out his liver and devoured it to satisfy her thirst for revenge for her father, uncle and son, who had fallen in Badr at the hands of the same Hamzah in single combats (*Ibn Hisham*. pp. 570, 581).

An Ahabish woman on the battlefield snatches the fallen Meccan flag and raises it till the last

(108) There were nobler incidents also. When during the first phase of the battle, several standard-bearers of the enemy fell one after another at the hands of the Muslims, and the enemy flag itself lay on the ground for long, nobody daring to raise it, it was a woman, 'Amrah Bint 'Alqamah the Harithite, i.e., of Ahabish tribe ally of the Meccans, who snatched it and raised it successfully till the last. This gave later a theme to the Muslim poet, Hassan Ibn Thabit, to compose a satire against the Ahabish who had come to the aid of the Quraish and had fled in the first phase, that their woman was better than their men, and said;

> "Had not the Harithite girl been there, they would have been
>
> Sold in markets like slaves", (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 571).

(109) A hypocrite utilized the opportunity of the Muslim defeat to kill a Muslim for private vengeance. Later he was tried, and when found guilty was sentenced to death by the Prophet (Ibn Habib, *al-Muhabbar*, p. 467; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 579).

(110) Another Muslim was killed at the hands of the Muslims by mistake. Blood money could be imposed, yet the son of the deceased, Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yaman, waived his right "for the sake of God", in view of the peculiar circumstances (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 577, 607). Possibly the poor old man did not know the watchword during the turmoil, and was not recognized by his comrades, since he was a latecomer in the field.

The End

(111) Slowly the news of the safety of the Prophet spread, and the Muslims began to gather round him again. A party of the enemy wanted to climb to the cave, but the Muslims pelted them with stones from high, and their number must also have been considerable. The enemy also did not suspect that the Prophet was there. So they retired without much ado (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 576). The enemy chief, Abu Sufyan, after apparently giving orders to his army to retire to their camp, made a final round of the battlefield, and found out the fact about the Prophet Muhammad. He was shouting boastfully, and the Prophet asked his companions not to reply. Yet when Abu Sufyan uttered some insulting remarks about the Prophet Muhammad, the famous altercations passed between him and 'Umar, who was with the Prophet (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 582-3; *Ibn Sad*, II/i, p. 33):

"Raised be the idol Hubal.

God is the Highest and the most Majestic.

We have the idol 'Uzza which ye have not.

God is our Friend (*Mawla*), and not yours.

Tell me the truth, O 'Umar, whether Ibn Qumai'ah is right in his claim of having killed Muhammad, for I trust you more than him.

O enemy of God, the Prophet and Abu Bakr are alive and actually listen to what thou sayest.

Uhud for Badr, a day for a day; Hanzalah for Hanzalah[1], war is but a game of chance (i.e., it has nothing to do with right or wrong).

Yes, but our martyrs are in paradise, and yours in hell."

(112) The Quraishites had already retired to the camp, and their chief did not, or could not, recall his men to capture this last pocket of Muslim resistance. He followed suit.

(113) The Prophet Muhammad was intrigued at their suspicious withdrawal. He concluded that they were going to sack the undefended city of Medina. So, in spite of wounds, he at once prepared as best he could to reorganize his handful of men for defence. Yet his intelligence service men soon brought the report that the enemy were riding their camels, and that the horses were being led alongside bare-backed. The Prophet said: "In that case, they are intending a long journey back home, and not any immediate warlike activity" (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 583).

(114) The Prophet was still not satisfied. He thought, the enemy must very soon repent and return back to Medina in order to pursue his victory to the end. And he was right. Anyhow, the Prophet marched a considerable distance in the wake of the enemy, sent also some advanced scouts — two of whom were captured and murdered by the enemy (*Ibn Sa'd* II/i, p. 35)—some of whom succeeded in assuring the enemy that the Prophet Muhammad had recovered and was prepared to meet them with a force stronger than the one he had mustered at Uhud; and the enemy's counter-bluff had no effect on the Muslims. The Prophet camped with the Muslims at Hamra

1 Hanzalah son of Abu Sufyan was killed by Muslims at Badr, and Hanzalah b. Abu 'Amir ar-Rahib (a very pious Muslim, son of a Christian monk) fell martyr at Uhud. His devotion to Islams was so great that angels came to give him the funeral bathing, as the Holy Prophet said. Abu Sufyan considers his son as eminent as this Muslim Martyr.

al-Asad, about ten miles from Medina, on the Wadi al-'Aqiq, on the left of Dhu 'l-Hulaifah, and caused to be lit five hundred fires during the night (Ibid); and after several days, when there was no more possibility of the enemy's return, he marched back to Medina (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 588-9).

(115) *Ibn Sa'd* (II/i, p. 34) assures us that on his return from Uhud, and before his march in the wake of the enemy, the Prophet had posted guards for the protection of his house. *Ibn Kathir* (Vol. IV, p. 20) describes in detail how the Prophet at Uhud took his own position under the banner of the Ansarites, and how he issued orders to different commanders for moving in different directions to oppose the enemy.

CHAPTER IV

The Battle of the Ditch

8-29 Shauwal 5H./3rd-24th January 627 Saturday to Saturday

The Fate of the Greatest Conspiracy Against Islam

The Jews of Khaibar harass the Muslim caravans to Medina

(116) The Battle of the Prophet Muhammad, variously known as of the Ditch (*Khandaq*), of the Clans (*ahzab*), and of the Siege of Medina (*Hisar*), was an important campaign of the time of the Prophet Muhammad, fought in the year 5 A.H.—627 C.E., just two years after the Battle of Uhud. Its gravity has been testified to by the Qur'an itself in pathetic terms:

> "When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when eyes grew wild and hearts reached to the throats, and ye were imagining vain thoughts concerning God. There were the Believers sorely tried and shaken with a mighty shock" (The Qur'an, 33: 10-11).

(117) The Quraishites had scored a victory in Uhud, yet they neither left a garrison in Medina in order to annex it to the territory of their own City State and thus assure the safety of their trade communications, nor even cared to pursue their victory to the end and mop up the pockets of Muslims in flight. The result was that no sooner had the Quraishites left the battlefield of Uhud than the Muslims regained their former position and even improved upon it in the following months. So, the ensuing expedition of Bi'r Ma'unah and Dhat' ar-Riqa' (both of which are far away in the Najd) in the east, and Dumat al-Jandal in the north (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 648, 661, 668) show unmistakably the evergrowing expansion of the zone of

Muslim influence. Thus not only the northern route to Syria and Egypt, but also the north-eastern route to Iraq, was successfully closed to Meccan caravans (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 547, *Tabariy*, I, 1374).

(118) In the meantime, the expulsion of the Jews of the Banu an-Nadir from Medina, if it strengthened the position of the Muslims inside the capital, created new difficulties from outside. For, the Jews migrated to the north, and settled in the oases of Khaibar, Wadi al-Qura and other stations of the trade-route to Syria. They at once began to incite the local and surrounding populations and to intrigue with them against the Muslim State. So we see that the ruler of Dumat-al-Jandal began to harass caravans going to Medina through that region (Mas'udiy, *at-Tanbih wa 'l-Ishraf*, p. 248). In the same way they agreed to hand over a year's entire harvest of the dates of Khaibar to the tribe of Ghatafan to join hands in attacking Medina (Baladhuriy, *Ansab*, I, 343). It was again the Nadirite Jews of Khaibar, who had incited the Meccans to renew their attack on Medina and synchronize it with that of the Ghatafan and the Fazarah (*Ibn Kathir*, iv/6). Ta'if also sent a contingent, as Baladhuriy (*Ansab*, I, 343) reports. Same was the attitude of the Banu Sulaim and of the Ahabish group of tribes. It is interesting, finally, to note that in the siege of Medina, these Khaibarites, particularly the Nadirite Jews, kept themselves aloof and sent no military contingent to participate in the campaign.

War of the Banu'l-Mustaliq a nubbing in the bud

(119) Before proceeding to describe the actual plan of the enemy, it seems useful to elucidate some obscurities regarding the allies on the enemy side.

(120) Apart from the Meccans, their allies of the Ahabish, the tribes Ghatafan, Fazarah, Murrah, Ashja' and Sulaim are generally, mentioned by the historians. Baladhuriy (*Ansab*, I, 343) adds the name of the Thaqif. But nobody seems to

suspect that the Banu'l-Mustaliq also formed a ring of the same Chain. We shall presently explain why we link them with the battle of the Ditch.

(121) The Mustaliqites were a branch of the Khuza'ah, but unlike other families of this tribe who were hereditary allies of the Prophet, the Mustaliqites formed part of the group of the Ahabish and were allies of the Quraishites of Mecca. (For details, see my article "Les Ahabish de la Mecque" in: Studi Orientalistici, presentation volume to Prof. Levi della Vida, I, 434-47). It is apparently through Muslim or friendly members of this tribe that the Prophet got news of the preparations of the Mustaliqites for attacking Medina. So he nubbed the mischief in the bud, made a surprise attack on them just two months before the arrival of the beseigers of the Khandaq (Ditch), and neutralized them.

(122) We repeat, it was just two months before the siege of Medina. We know that the historians differ some placing the incident in the year 4 H., others in 5 and yet others in 6 H. But as al-Baihaqiy (*Dala'il an-nubuwah*, MS Istanbul) has explained it, it all depends on the method of reckoning (before the reform of the caliph 'Umar, the Muslims counted their era in three different manners: Some counting from one year before the Hijra, others from one year after the Hijra also), and all agree on the month of Sha'ban, which in fact means the Sha'ban of the same year as that of the battle of the Ditch.

(123) One will understand better the gravity of the situation by locating on the map the regions from which the various invaders had come to attack Medina.

The plan of the Jews to destroy the Muslim metropolis of Medina and the preparations of the Prophet to meet the danger

(124) When the ruler of Dumat al-Jandal molested the caravans going to Medina, the Prophet Muhammad took it seriously, and himself set out at the head of an army to deal with the menace. Ibn Hisham records (p. 668) that the

Prophet Muhammad returned midway through from the expedition against Dumat al-Jandal. He had passed through the territory of Ghatafan and Fazarah. It is possible that he learnt there their intention of very soon attacking Medina. Maybe the project was expedited and precipitated for the very reason that the Prophet Muhammad was away from his headquarters with the intention of a long journey, viz., to Dumat al-Jandal. In such case, the enemy did not cancel their preparations even when the Prophet Muhammad returned to Medina midways, as they did not cancel, formerly, the expedition against the Muslims in Badr in spite of the escape of their caravan threatened by Muslims. It is also possible that the secret agent of the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca sent word about the conspiracy. The message is said to have been redirected from Medina to the camp where the Prophet Muhammad was. In fact, *ash-Shamiy* records that the report of the Quraishite preparations was brought by the Khuza'ites to Medina with unusual speed in four days only (instead of the usual twelve days) (ash-Sha'miy, *Sirah*, § Khandaq).

(125) To my mind it was all a deep laid plot by the Jews of Khaibar: to organize a huge force of Meccans and Ghatafanids to attack Medina on the one hand and on the other to entice the Prophet Muhammad with a mere handful of men away to Dumat al-Jandal, which lay at a distance of fifteen days' journey from Medina, and with two separate, easy actions to destroy the Muslim metropolis and to murder the Prophet Muhammad. The incident at Dumat al-Jandal was not a mere coincidence and isolated fact, but part of the game played by these Jews.

(126) Anyhow, the Prophet Muhammad hurriedly returned to Medina and busied himself with defence measures.

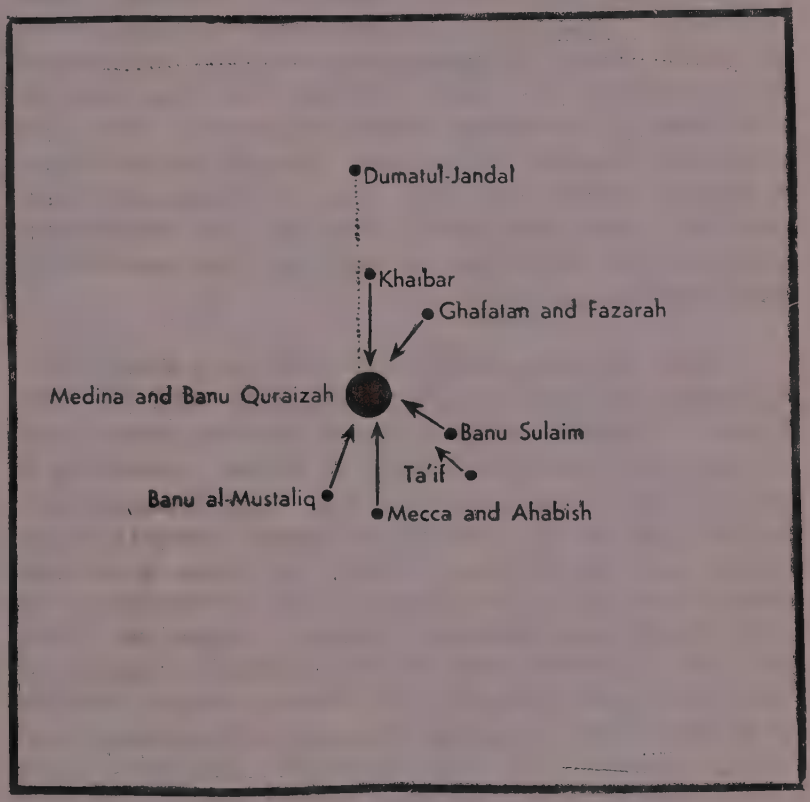
(127) After the lesson of Uhud, it was unanimously decided this time to defend the city from inside, and to court a siege rather than fight in the open. To assure protection further, it was decided to dig a long ditch around the vulner-

Mosque of Shaikhain (twin tower of Shaikhain)

Five Mosques of the Prophet's Camp (1964)

able portion of the Muslim town. Muslim historians generally attribute it to the counsel of Salman al-Farsiy (*Tabariy*, I, 1465). Yet a letter of the Prophet Muhammad (preserved by *al-Waqidiy* as well as *al-Maqriziy*) in reply to a taunting letter of Abu Sufyan that instead of fighting he had unexpectedly and bewilderingly taken refuge behind ditches, and expressing wonder as to whom he had learnt this strategy from, makes reply, "God has inspired me in this" (cf. my *al-Wathaiq al-siyasiyah*, Nos. 6, 7, for text).

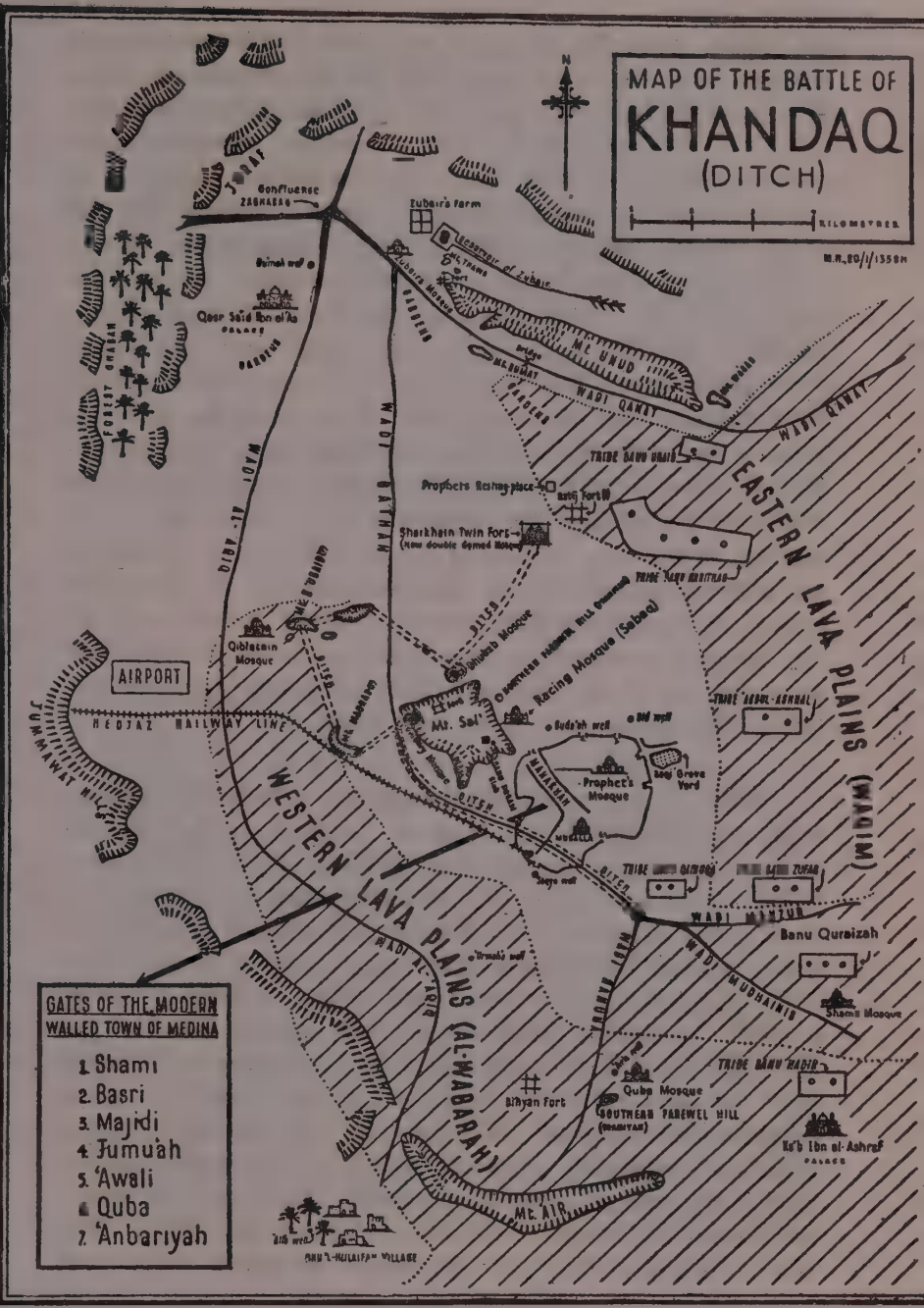
(128) Be that as it may, the Prophet was progressive in matters military, and was always in advance of his adversaries in order to overwhelm the enemy by lessening bloodshed on either side.



The engineering feat of digging the ditch

(129) When the ditch was decided to be dug around the Muslim town, the Prophet set out on horseback along with a number of local Muslims from among the Meccan refugees and Ansarites on a tour of inspection. The purpose was to get an idea of the terrain and to determine the points of strategical importance and to select the place where the Muslim army should camp (al-Waqidiy, *Maghazi*, fol. 102b). It was also decided to send, as usual, women and children, cattle, provisions and property of value to towers and fortresses, which numbered by hundreds in the city; and that the Muslims should camp on the base of Mount Sal', and dig a long and deep ditch. Around the city were gardens, these being particularly dense in the south. The passage between various gardens was zig-zag, and so narrow that no formation except in long columns was possible for the enemy. Naturally even small outposts could stop and immobilize these long columns, which were particularly vulnerable. In the east, there were the habitations of the Banu Quraizah and other Jews and relations with them were for the time being correct. The north was very exposed, and to a certain extent also the west, as I have explained in detail in the previous chapter.

(130) So it was decided first to dig an N-shaped ditch, connecting the two lava plains, beginning from the Twin Towers of Shaikhain in the north-east, touching the northern "Farewell Hill" (Thaniyat al-Wada) at Madhad, converging to the west as far as the hill of the Banu 'Ubaid returning again to Mount Sal' as far as the Victory Mosque (*Masjid al-Fat'h*) (*as-Samhudiy*, s.v. Khandaq.) Later, the tribes in the west extended the ditch on their own initiative, further south as far as the Musalla of al-Ghamamah (Waqidiy, *Maghazi*, fol. 103b). This later caused the Wadi Bat'han to change its course and flow in the course of the ditch (*al-Matariy*, in *loco*). The idea of the ditch became so popular that even in the extreme south in Quba, where there was no danger, some over-cautious people dug ditches around their towers (Waqidiy, *Maghazi*,


MAP OF THE BATTLE OF
KHANDAQ
(DITCH)
KILOMETRES
N
M.R.20/1/1358H
Confluence
Zubair's farm
Quba Mosque
Mt. UHUD
WADI QANAT
EASTERN LAVA PLAINS (HIDIM)
Prophet's Racing-place
Sharkhain Twin Fort
(now double domed Mosque)
Qiblatain Mosque
AIRPORT
HEJAZ RAILWAY LINE
Racing Mosque (Sabaq)
Mt. Sal'
Prophet's Mosque
Baqi' Grave Yard
WESTERN LAVA PLAINS (AL-WABARAH)
WADI MANSUR
Banu Quraizah
Shami Mosque
TRIBE BANU HABIR
Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf
Bihyan Fort
Mt. AIR
SOUTHERN FAREWELL HILL
GATES OF THE MODERN WALLED TOWN OF MEDINA
1. Shami
2. Basri
3. Majidi
4. Jumu'ah
5. 'Awali
6. Quba
7. 'Anbariyah

fol. 103b). Was this ditch just dug deep and broad or was it a trench with masonry work? For those early days of Islam (5 H.) and the hurry with which the work was to be carried out, one would be inclined to the first alternative. However about a century and a half later when Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah (a great grandson of Imam al-Hasan) tried to substitute himself in ousting the 'Abbasid al-Mansur from the caliphate, in 144 H., and there was a fight in Madinah between him and the army of the caliph, the historians (Ibn Kathir, *Bidayah*, X, 88, Tabariy, anno 144, etc.), report that a ditch was dug in part of the place where the Prophet had also dug one; and when some masonry work was discovered. Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah showed the bricks to the public, saying that they belonged to the holy work of the Holy Prophet. Evidently people were filled with piety and enthusiasm. Were the bricks really used by the Prophet, or did they belong to a later building in that place and when it was afterwards destroyed, for age or some other reason, the foundation bricks remained intact, and Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah imagined that they came from the work of the time of the Prophet? I am personally inclined to the second hypothesis. But let us revert to the main topic.

(131) The time available between the Prophet Muhammad's return from the expedition of Dumat al-Jandal and the arrival of the enemy was about three to four months according to the data of our historians. The volunteers of Islam counted in all three thousand. The Prophet Muhammad planned the ditch, chalked out portions, and every batch of ten got forty cubits to dig in fixed dimensions of breadth and depth (Tabariy, p. 1467). I deduce therefrom that the original length of the ditch was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles ($5\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres). The depth and width have not been expressly mentioned, though there is a casual reference to it when the chroniclers say that Salman al-Farsiy, who was a well-built stalwart, and could accomplish single-handed the work of several, dug alone "five cubits in length and five cubits in depth" (Waqidiy, *Maghazi*, fol. 103b.) This is not conclusive regarding the depth, for others could have

Mosque of Dhubab (1964). in the centre of the photo

Victory Mosque

completed what was left by Salman. There is other evidence. It is said that even the best horses of the enemy could not cross the ditch by jumping except in one narrow corner, maybe where the ditch was joined with hills serving as watch towers and utilized as ramparts to fling arrows on the advancing enemy. As early as al-Waqidiy it is stated: "There were several gates to the ditch yet we do not know their location" (the *Maghazi*, fol. 103b). Maybe it refers to these hills which were joined with the ditch. However, an enemy horseman, Naufal al-Makhzumiy, is reported (Ibn Hisham, p. 699) to have fallen in the ditch while attempting to jump across it with his horse. Maybe, the ditch was ten yards wide and five yards deep.

(132) According to *Ibn Hisham* (p. 672), the volunteers worked in the ditch during the day and returned to their homes to pass the night with their families. Yet the Prophet Muhammad himself pitched a tent on a hillock — where the mosque Dhubab still commemorates it — and remained night and day on the spot. He further encouraged the labourers by himself joining in one of the parties to dig and execute the defence plan (*Tabariy*, pp. 1465-7).

The Prophet Muhammad supervises and takes part in the digging of the ditch

(133) There were naturally some innocent quarrels over the composition of teams, but in the presence of the Prophet Muhammad these were quickly and amicably settled. We have seen above the extraordinary capacity of Salman al-Farsiy to work. Obviously every team wanted to have him with them. In order to avoid friction, the Prophet Muhammad in this case said, "No Salman belongs to us, to the members of the Family (of the Prophet — *Ahl al-Bait*)". One could conclude from this that the party with which the Prophet Muhammad and Salman shared the work consisted of the family of the Prophet Muhammad, such as 'Aliy, etc. But according to *Tabariy* (I, 1467), it was like any other party, consisting of some Ansarite and others. Some reports (*al-Waqidiy*, fol. 103b;

ash-Sha'miy, in loco) say that Abu Bakr and 'Umar never parted company with each other, and that one day when the Prophet Muhammad, due to heavy work and lack of sleep, had fallen asleep during the day, Abu Bakr and 'Umar were seen standing by the head of the Prophet Muhammad and keeping the labourers away, so as not to awake him. The same report adds this interesting detail, that Abu Bakr and 'Umar carried earth in their clothes for haste, since the Muslims did not find baskets in their hurry.

(134) The Prophet Muhammad supervised the work in person and controlled even the minute details. Once a big rock prevented the deepening of the ditch, and the people wanted to simply deviate. The Prophet Muhammad himself descended, and with his blows broke it into pieces (*Ibn Hisham*, 673; *Tabariy*, I, 1467 ff; another incident, *Ibn Hisham*, p. 671).

(135) Although it was the fasting month of Ramadan, the work proceeded with fervour. The diggers chanted songs, and competed with each other in the work. Even boys, filled with youthful enthusiasm, did their best to help. Zaid Ibn Thabit was also a boy in his early teens at that time. Tired by incessant work and the heat, one day he fell asleep. The mirthful 'Umarah Ibn Hazm noticed it, and took away the garments and digging tools of Zaid, and concealed them somewhere as a pleasantry. When Zaid awoke, he was naturally terrified. When the report reached the Prophet Muhammad, he chided Zaid by naming him "Sleepy" (*Abu Ruqad*—the sleepy one), and he also mildly rebuked 'Umarah, saying that it was too much to joke with a boy in that way (*Waqidiy*, fol. 103/a).

(136) There were also feasts now and then. Someone slaughtered a sheep, somebody else brought a basketful of dates, and the like.

(137) Under § 44 of the Constitution of the City-State of Medina of the year 1 A.H.—622 C.E., the Jews of Medina were in duty bound to co-operate with the Muslims for common

defence in case of foreign aggression. According to *al-Waqidiy* (fol. 103b) the Prophet Muhammad got on loan digging implements from the Jews of the Banu Quraizah.

(138) According to *Ibn Sa'd* (II/1, p. 48), the eastern portion of the ditch, that is from the Twin Towers of Shaikhain near Ratij in the eastern lava plain to Mount Dhubab, was entrusted to the Refugees (*Muhajirun*); and the rest from Mount Dhubab to Mount Banu 'Ubaid near the Qiblatain Mosque, and passing by Madhad, back to the Victory Mosque on Mount Sal', was entrusted to the more numerous Ansarites as the stretch was also longer.

(139) Ratij must have been the name of some village with a famous tower of that name. It has disappeared now. The Shaikhain Towers, however, have been commemorated by the double-domed mosque of Shaikhain, now near Uhud. It is said two old persons, man and woman, used to live then in the towers, and the towers were so close to each other that these old people from above both could talk to each other. Hence the name of Shaikhain (i.e., *two old persons*) for these twin towers. Dhubab is still there. The name Banu 'Ubaid has now changed. The mosque of Qiblatain, in the western lava plain, must, however, suffice to locate the hill. Madhad, to the West of the Victory Mosque—as al-Hazimiy in his *Amakin* No. 832, MS. indicates. The Victory Mosque on Mount Sal' is well known and is still venerated. The name is explained by the fact that it was here that the Prophet Muhammad prayed for victory for several days consecutively, and God did not disappoint him. It is built on the site where the tent of the Prophet Muhammad was pitched during the siege. It is on a north-westerly peak of Mount Sal', and is in a commanding position.

Arrival of the enemy

(140) The work of digging proceeded apace, and by the time the enemy hordes arrived both from the north and the south,

early in the month of Shauwal, the ditch was completed. The enemy camped, as during the Uhud campaign, in the north. The Quraishites stayed at the confluence of the Zaghabah, from Ru'mah westwards, between Juraf and the forest of al-Ghabah. They were accompanied by their mercenary allies of the Ahabish and others of the tribes of the Kinanah and of the people of Tihamah. It is said they numbered twelve thousand maybe including the seven thousand of the northern confederates. The Quraishites and company the southern confederates had come, in the words of the Qur'an, "from below the Muslims". The Ghatafanites and Fazarites, the northern confederates, who had joined hands as mercenaries at the Jewish offer of the entire annual date harvest of Khaibar (cf. *al-Waqidiy*, fol. 101-2). together with the Banu Asad of the Najd, coming as they did "from above the Muslims" camped at Dhanab Naqma, on Wadi Na'man, towards Uhud. They numbered in all seven thousand.

(141) On the arrival of the enemy, the Prophet Muhammad sent his family to different towers (*Tabariy*, I, 1470). His wife 'A'ishah was in the tower of the Banu Harithah (*Tabariy*, I, 1476). His aunt Safiyah was in the tower of Fari' belonging to the Ansarite poet Hassan Ibn Thabit, where an incident of her bravery is well known (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 680). Finding the Muslims away from the town and occupied with a grim war, a band of Jews planned to loot Muslim houses and molest women and children. When one of them climbed the outer wall of this tower, Safiyah killed him single-handed with a sword and threw the head on the band below. These got frightened and dispersed (cf. *Lisan*, s.v. *qaf- dad-dad*). At the end of the war, though a woman, Safiyah was awarded a share in the booty in the same proportion as the men soldiers, and she merited it (*Ya'qubiy*, Vol. II, p. 49).

(142) It is reported that fields were already harvested a month before the battle (*al-Sha'miy*, Vol. II, p. 211; *Waqidiy*, fol. 102/a). *Sha'miy* even precises that enemy horses found on that account nothing except what their masters had brought

Battlefield of Khandaq, a panorama

with them.

(143) When the enemy had settled in his camp, the Muslim volunteers, too, made their encampment near Mount Sal', and the Prophet also moved his tent from Mount Dhubab to where the Victory Mosque now stands. Close by, there are four mosques, attributed to Salman, Abu Bakr, 'Uthman and Abu Dharr. May be, these personalities had their tents on those spots. These five mosques are greatly venerated by pilgrims to Medina.

(144) The three-thousand-strong Muslim militia had thirty-five horsemen, who constantly patrolled the length and breadth of the ditch (*al-Waqidiy*. fol. 105/a).

The Battle of the Ditch

(145) The Muslims, camping on Mount Sal' and at its base, were divided into groups, and were employed by shifts for the constant watch and ward of the ditch. Both horsemen and infantry shared in the duty. There was never a pitched battle, but only the shooting of arrows was resorted to on both sides from time to time, especially when the enemy tried to capture a "bridgehead" on the ditch, in order to cross it. Enemy horsemen also roamed along the extent of the ditch and looked for negligence on the part of the Muslims. The hardier among them tried once or twice to jump across it. As we have seen previously, Naufal Ibn 'Abdullah al-Makhzumiy fell from his horse into the ditch, and the Muslims began to stone him. 'Aliy is said to have stopped his comrades, descended into the ditch, and severed his head. The enemy was prepared to pay handsomely (ten thousand dirhams) for his dead body, yet the Prophet Muhammad allowed its removal gratis (*Ibn Hanbal*, Vol. I, p. 271; *al-Sha'miy*, Vol. IV, p. 214/a, etc.). On another occasion, a few of the enemy horse did succeed in penetrating into the Muslim lines, yet cut off from their main group, they could not dare stay for long among those who loved death more than this worldly life, and they

returned quickly, leaving several dead behind (*Tabariy*, I, 1475-6).

(146) Once two Muslim patrols during the dark night, coming from opposite directions, clashed with each other, and before the mistake was discovered, by use of the watchword apparently, some blood was already shed. When the incident was reported to the Prophet Muhammad, he said: "Those who died have died martyrs; the wounded have received their wounds in the path of God". And he let the matter go unpunished. (*al-Dhakhirah al-burhaniyah*, by Burhan ad-Din al-Marghinaniy, ch. 23. "On the Muslim killing his companions during the flight" MS. Yeni Jami', Istanbul). Of course, he must have warned his people to be more careful in future.

(147) The stocks of the Quarishite food and fodder began to dwindle. They did receive some replenishment, apparently from Khaibar, the route to which was open and shorter than that to Mecca. Yet it is reported that once the Nadirite Jew, Huyaiy Ibn Akhtab, from Khaibar, sent twenty camel-loads of barley, date fruits and husks, and it all fell into the hands of the vigilant Muslim patrols, who drove the camels with the precious loads as booty to the Muslim camp (*ash-Sha'miy*, *in loco*).

(148) Irritated by the ineffective siege and dwindling stocks of food, the Quraishites employed the Nadirite Jew, Huyaiy Ibn Akhtab, in order to induce the Jews living in Medina to stab the Muslims in the back from inside the city. The Quraizite Jews, the strongest of their groups, hesitated at first, yet they were prevailed upon by their crafty co-religionists. The Quraizites began to prepare, and the prematurely changed attitude of some of their members roused the suspicion of some Muslims in the locality, who heard them insulting and abusing the Prophet Muhammad by name. The Prophet Muhammad sent an intelligence officer to find out the truth, with instructions not to divulge the news, if all was not well. On his return, he was able to report that much worse was true than was suspected (cf *Waqidiy*, fol. 105/a). Their plan may be guessed

from the measures taken by the Prophet Muhammad to counteract it. According to *Sha'miy* (Vol. II, p. 213/a) the Quraizites had wanted to attack the Muslim town during the night. So the Prophet Muhammad despatched Salimah Ibn Aslam Ibn Huraish at the head of two hundred men, and Zaid Ibn Harithah at the head of three hundred men, for the protection of the Muslim town, apparently from different directions. These people constantly shouted the Muslim war cry, *Allahu Akbar* — God is Great — all through the night. The Quraizites were terrified thereby and did not move (Ibn Sa'd, II/i, p. 48).

(149) In another report (*Waqidiy*, fol. 105/b), it is said that Abu Bakr related the following: "I used to climb the summit of Mount Sal' constantly in those critical times and glance at the houses of Medina, and as I found them quiet, I thanked God".

(150) The graffiti inscriptions found on the rocks of Mount Sal' — for which see the *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad-Deccan, India, for October, 1939 — dating this very battle, also bear witness to the grave concern felt by the Muslims. One of the inscriptions, in the handwriting of 'Umar, is too eloquent to require a comment on the text, which reads: "Night and day, Abu Bakr and 'Umar humbly prayed God against all that was untoward".

(151) Apparently the besiegers intensified their activity from the other side of the ditch. The report that the Prophet Muhammad and other defenders once did not find time even for prayers, and that the services of Zuhr (*midday*), 'Asr (*afternoon*), Maghrib (*sunset*) and 'Isha (*night*), all four were offered together during the night (*Kanz al-'Ummal*, § Ahzab; *Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 49; Maqriziy, *Imta'*, I, 233) must relate to one of these critical last days of the siege, the gravity of which has been borne witness to by the Qur'an itself, as recorded previously.

(151-a) The siege lasted from two to three weeks, according to differing reports quoted by Maqriziy in his *Imta'*:

15 days, 20 days, nearly a month. The reason of the divergence may be explained perhaps by the fact that not all the enemy allies arrived at the same moment, the first-comers staying for nearly a month, and the last-comers only fifteen days.

The cold war

(152) The situation required prompt action. So we see the Prophet Muhammad sending secret agents to negotiate a separate peace with the greedy allies of the enemy, the Ghatafan and Fazarah contingents, led respectively by Harith Ibn 'Awf and 'Uyainah Ibn Hisn. After some haggling, there seemed a possibility of agreement, which was drawn up on a parchment. It demanded part of the date harvest of Medina, between the third considered reasonable by the Prophet Muhammad and the half demanded by the enemy concerned. It may be recalled, they had joined forces with the Quraishites on similar terms, as mentioned previously; and these mercenaries had no personal quarrel to settle with the Muslims. However, the garden-owners of Medina saw that no useful purpose would be served by consenting to this exorbitant demand, and there the matter was dropped (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 676; *Tabariy*, p. 1474).

(153) The Prophet then resorted to propaganda and cold war. He sent Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ud, a member of the Ashja' tribe of North Arabia, who came as a besieger along with his tribe, was convinced of the truth of Islam during this siege yet whose conversion to Islam was not yet publicly known. He went first to the Quraizite Jews, and said: "It is not a certainty at this stage that the Meccans will succeed. Once these foreign invaders return, as they must do sooner or later, you cannot defend yourselves single-handed against Muhammad. So do not embroil yourselves without first ascertaining that the Meccans will fight their former co-citizen to the last. Ask them for hostages as an earnest to this end". The Quraizites found the counsel reasonable. Then the agent went to the Quraishite camp, and told them that according to

Five Mosques of the Prophet's Camp (1939)

his information, the Quraizite Jews had entered into a conspiracy with Muhammad; and as an earnest of their friendship, had promised to get hold of some of the Quraishite prominent personalities and hand them over to him. "Beware of these Jews. Rather ask them, as the earnest of their loyal collaboration with you in the common struggle, to fight on the sacred Sabbath day. For the Muslims would be off their guard on that day in respect of Jews." After counselling similarly the Ghatafanites and other enemy groups, he returned to the Muslim camp and spread the rumour that the Jews were asking the invaders for hostages in order to hand them over to the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad was duly informed of the rumour in the Muslim camp, on hearing which he remarked: "Maybe we ourselves have ordered them (the Jews) to do that". A reporter, Mas'ud al-Nammam—who seems apparently to be the father of the agent sent by the Prophet Muhammad, Nu'aim Ibn Mas'ud al-Ashja'iy, and was a stupid old man — hurried to the Quraishite camp, and just for the sake of looking well-informed, told the Quraishite commander Abu Sufyan, what the Prophet Muhammad had remarked about his having asked the Jews to demand hostages. The Jewish delegation had come there in the meantime and was explaining the desirability of hostages before they began open war against the Prophet Muhammad. The propaganda had successfully sown suspicion among the Quraishites and the Quraizites in order to estrange them and not to let them collaborate (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 680-1; Sarakhsiy, *Shark Siyar Kabir*, Vol. I, pp. 84-85, new Munajjed ed. I, 121-2).

(154) The last of the profane months, Shawwal, was nearing the end; Dhu al-Qa'dah, the first of the three consecutive months of the truce of God, was approaching, in which the Meccans had reason and interest to be back in Mecca in order to receive pilgrims rather than to fight, and thus violate their superstitions regarding the months of the truce of God. They found that food stocks had been exhausted, the season also had worsened, and a chill and terrific wind uprooted every tent in the camp. Abu Sufyan decided to return home to

Mecca, and others followed suit. It is said, Abu Sufyan was so upset that he jumped on the back of his camel, which was sitting, and wanted to raise it, not remembering that its legs were tied with rope. Even so, the astute Meccan chief did not forget in his haste to command Khalid Ibn al-Walid and 'Amr Ibn al-'As, at the head of the two hundred horsemen, to be ready for rearguard action in case of Muslim pursuit (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 50).

The End

(155) The Prophet on his part despatched a trusted officer, in this terrific night of cold and wind, and bade him "bring the news from the enemy camp and yet on no account to terrify them". Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yaman, the officer deputed, relates: "The Prophet Muhammad asked several times for a volunteer to go on this errand. Nobody offered himself owing to the severe weather. Then he asked me by name, and naturally I could not refuse the command. I went and returned all these long miles of journey to and from the enemy camp without being in the least inconvenienced by the weather, as if I was walking in a hot bath-room. I saw with my own eyes what Abu Sufyan did with his camel with tied legs, and I was so close that I could easily have pierced him with my arrow. I remembered the instructions not to terrify them on any account, and abstained from killing our chief enemy. When I returned I reported all that I had seen to the Prophet Muhammad" (Baihaqiy, *Sunan Kubra*, on the authority of the *Sahih* of Muslim; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 683).

(156) Thus the great enterprise of the Jewish-Meccan conspiracy came to a fruitless end.

CHAPTER V

The Conquest of Mecca

(21 Ramadan 8 H./14th December 629, Wednesday)

The strategy of the Prophet Muhammad

(157) As had been predicted by the Prophet Muhammad, the Siege of the Ditch (5 A.H.—627 C.E.) proved to be the climax and the high tide of the Quraishite offensives. Pent up by their efforts, thenceforward they had to be content with defence against the ever-growing Muslim power. Diverse were its causes: mere failure in the Battle of Badr and the Siege of the Ditch was not responsible for the changed situation.

(158) In fact, the Prophet Muhammad always preferred both as a general policy and as a point of principle, to overwhelm the enemy but not to annihilate him. The means thereto were twofold : bringing economic pressure to bear on the Quraishites, and increasing his own military might ceaselessly with a long-range policy. He struck at the right moment when the enemy would not dare offer any resistance and his objective could be reached in a bloodless manner. The resources and energies of the enemy, preserved intact, if redirected in better and constructive channels, could but add to the power of the Islamic State.

(159) The most important, if not the only means of the livelihood of the inhabitants of Mecca—that "Valley without Cultivation" (Quran 14/137)—was the caravan trade of winter and summer. (Quran, 106/1-4). In less than four months after the migration to Medina, the Prophet tried and practically succeeded in closing the northern route of summer traffic passing by Medina to Syria and Egypt. The Prophet Muhammad had

concluded alliances with the tribes inhabiting west of Medina, in the neighbourhood of Yanbu', by which the route frequented by the Meccans passed. History has conserved for posterity the text of several of these pacts (*cf. Documents sur la Diplomatie musulmane à l'Epoque du Prophet*, by Hamidullah). With the expansion of Islam and of the Muslim State, the influence of the Prophet Muhammad was also extended. Soon he was able to close the route of the Quraishites to Iraq via Najd (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 547). These northern regions were frequented in summer. The winter caravans generally went towards the south, to Yaman and 'Uman, via Ta'if. Naturally this could not so easily be stopped in the early days. Nevertheless the international trade between India and Europe, which is said to have passed through Mecca, was stopped. This deprived the Quraishites of their monopoly of providing escorts, which must have been a means of considerable income, not to speak of the direct gains of the northern traffic, which was reputed to bring them hundred percent profits. Small detachments were sent even to harass the enemy on its southern marches. One of the earliest expeditions was that of 'Abdullah Ibn Jahsh to Nakhlah, near Ta'if (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 423-4). Another sent a little later in the year 3 A.H—624 C.E. to Qaradah was able to capture from the Meccans a load of silver worth 100,000 dirhams (*Tabariy*, p. 1375). Did this belong to the goods in transit? After the Battle of the Ditch, in 5 A.H.—627 C.E., Muslim influence penetrated into Najd as far in the east as Yamamah, which granary was the main source of Quraishite import of grain. When Thumamah Ibn Uthal, a chieftain of Yamamah, stopped at the instance of the Prophet, exports of grain, historians record that a famine in Mecca was the result (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 997; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Isti'ab*, No. 278). The Hijaz is recorded to have generally suffered from lack of rain in this year, 6 A.H.—627-8 C.E. The incident that the Prophet Muhammad had once sent a sum of 500 gold dinars to be spent on the destitute in the then enemy Mecca—and at which Abu Sufyan had grumbled that the Prophet was trying to win the hearts of the young Meccans in order to corrupt them (Sarakhsiy, *Mabsut*, X, 91-92) — probably also

Shumaisi (Hudaibiyah), as it was in 1939

Hudud al-Haram (to delimit the sacred territory around Mecca), near Hudaibiyah

belonged to the same period. Perhaps the most potent of all factors was that gradually the allies of the Quraishites were deserting them, and were either embracing Islam or otherwise making friends with Muhammad. As a matter of fact, we come across, at this moment in history, Muslim tribes inhabiting in all directions from Mecca, north, east, and even south. Soon came the truce of Hudaibiyah (6 A.H.—628 C.E.). Khaibar in the north capitulated two months afterwards (Muharram 7 A.H.—628 C.E.). Scarcely a year had passed when the Meccans broke the truce, though they repented the next moment. They sent a delegation to Medina and tried to renew the pact of Hudaibiyah. The Prophet Muhammad gave an evasive reply. Naturally the Meccans feared Muslim reprisals every day: they were then alone, and had practically no one to rely upon for help.

The truce of Hudaibiyah

(160) It should be recalled that in the year following the Siege of the Ditch, the Prophet Muhammad was able to persuade the Quraishites at Hudaibiyah to conclude a truce with the Muslims for ten years. The Quraishites were given all they really desired and also their *amour propre* was satisfied in return for their remaining neutral in case Muslims were at war with a third party. The Meccans may or may not have known that in this way they were deserting the Jews of Khaibar, and consequently they were also losing Jewish help against the Muslims. There were not only the two main parties to the truce of Hudaibiyah, but also those who adhered to the terms of the truce on one side or the other. It was these subsidiary parties who dragged the main groups into the war. So, it is said, the Bakrites once talked of the Prophet Muhammad in an abusive manner, whereupon the Khuza'ites, who were the allies of the Muslims, revolted. Probably they shed some blood of their neighbours, the Bakrites. The Bakrites prepared a night attack in revenge wherein the Meccans also took part. As a Khuza'ite deputation later related to the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, the night attack was launched when the Khuza'ites were in congregational

prayer. Naturally, death and injuries among these defenceless men were unusually high (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 805). There no longer remained the danger of being engaged simultaneously on two fronts, Khaibar having already been reduced to submission and disarmed. The Prophet Muhammad had a free hand to deal with Mecca. He detested shedding human blood, and tried to take the enemy unawares. We can never admire too much the way in which he succeeded in this difficult task.

How the Prophet Muhammad moved his army, 10,000 strong, against the Meccans

(161) Great preparations were made for an expedition, but the Prophet did not disclose his intentions to anybody. The secrecy was so great that such an eminent personality as Abu Bakr went one day to his daughter 'A'ishah (wife of the Holy Prophet) and asked her if she knew where the expedition was intended to? She could not enlighten her father. (Maqriziy, *Imta'*, I, 361). People were naturally intrigued. As we shall see, it was an army of ten thousand volunteers which was being assembled. (cf. Bible, Salomon's Song, V, 10).

(162) An army of ten thousand was something unusual in those days, and could hardly be sent unperceived by the enemy scouts or their friends. There was no question of night attack, the distance being one of twelve days' march. First of all the Prophet Muhammad stopped all exit, to friends as well as to neutrals from Medina. The information service was so efficient that when Hatib Ibn Abi Balta'ah, a simpleton among Muslims, sent a secret message to Mecca, the message-bearer was easily arrested in the suburbs. The letter said: "Great preparations are being made here; may be Mecca is intended". The message was confiscated, but the Prophet let go the message-bearer, a slave woman, who went directly to Mecca. She was unlettered, and had apparently no knowledge of the contents of the letter she was bearing on some remuneration; yet the Prophet thought that she might relate in Mecca her adventure and the Meccans, with their guilty conscience might

infer useful indications. So some diversion was necessary. And in fact the Prophet Muhammad (in the words of Baladhuriy, *Ansab*, I, 381 and Ibn Sa'd, II/i, p. 96): "when he wanted to attack Mecca, he sent Abu Qatadah with a detachment towards Idam, on three day's journey in the North of Medina, so that one might think that the Prophet was intending to go in that direction [and that this expedition constituted a reconnoissance] and rumour should circulate in that sense".

(163) When the Prophet wanted actually to proceed, he still wanted to hide not only the destination, but even the real strength of his forces. So according to the chronicler al-Ya'qubiy, the Prophet Muhammad ordered the various contingents of volunteers not to assemble in Medina, but to join the Prophet when he passed their tribal settlements, all along the route to Mecca. This strategy succeeded so well that the Quraishites could not get news of the arrival of the Muslim army before it camped on the other side of the mountains surrounding Mecca. To increase the effect of the shock, the Prophet Muhammad ordered that every Muslim soldier should light a separate fire. Ten thousand fires during the night gave the impression that many times more people were cooking their meal. Providence also came to the help of the Muslims. Abu Sufyan, the supreme chief of the Meccans, fell that night into the hands of Muslim scouts; and consequently nobody in Mecca knew what to do. Next morning the Prophet Muhammad began his march on Mecca, which we shall presently describe, and Abu Sufyan was freed, being told that he could assure the people of Mecca that whoever shut himself in his house, or laid down his arms, or took refuge in the compound around the sanctuary of the Ka'ba, or entered the house of Abu Sufyan, would be unharmed.

(164) To declare one's house as asylum is certainly a great honour. Perhaps Abu Sufyan merited it. For the famous

author Thabit al-Bunaniy, a *Tabi'iy*[1] assures us that in the early days of Islam, when the Prophet Muhammad was harassed by street boys and other commoners in Mecca, he used to find asylum in the house of Abu Sufyan, who had the courage and the culture to defend his guest (Ibn al-Jawziy, *al-Mujtaba*, MS. Cairo, p. 83 cf. also my article "New Light on the Character of Abu Sufyan", in: Islamic Literature, Lahore, 1953, V, 539-44). The Prophet Muhammad did not forget this, and this was his reward.

(165) There was in fact no experienced and influential person at the moment in Mecca; Abu Jahl had died, Khalid Ibn al-Walid and Amr Ibn al-As had embraced Islam, Abu Sufyan had suddenly disappeared (as we know, he had fallen in the hands of the Muslims); and there was no time to call allies, if any, for help. Some junior chiefs, like 'Ikrimah (son of Abu Jahl), no doubt initiated some resistance, at least with the help of the members of their clans, and there were some skirmishes between them and the Muslim detachment under the fiery commander Khalid Ibn al-Walid. In the main, however, the Meccans believed in the assurances brought by Abu Sufyan, and also recommended by him, and permitted a peaceful and practically bloodless occupation.

(166) Even if he had wanted to organize and offer resistance, it was too late for Abu Sufyan to do so. For the Prophet Muhammad did not allow him to quit the Muslim camp before his army was actually on the march on Mecca, and had effectively occupied all the approaches to the city (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 814). There was no question of mustering and mobilizing their own volunteers, far less of sending word to allies, if any, and getting their help in time. Abu Sufyan was the trusted leader of the Meccans and he sincerely believed

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1 An Arabic word used to describe those men and women who conversed not with the Prophet Muhammad but after his death with his Companions, and transmitted the traditions which are related by these Companions ; in other words, Muslims of the second generation.

that resistance was impossible and utterly futile as his dialogue with his wife, preserved by chroniclers, shows. An irresistible force of the enemy, coupled with an unbelievable clemency proved too much for the Meccans at this psychological moment and their hate for Islam must have been thrown in the melting-pot for any eventual new mould.

Disposition of the Muslim army corps led by the Prophet Muhammad

(167) Mecca is situated in a valley, surrounded on all sides by high mountains. There is only one highway which traverses the city from north to south. Two byways join this main thoroughfare : the Hajun Road and Kada' Road.

(168) The main army group of the Muslims, with the Prophet Muhammad himself in their midst, advanced from the main, northern, side. The high-town (*Ma'lat*) is situate there. A group was led by Zubair Ibn al-'Auwam on the Kada road, in order to close the escape to the sea coast, via Wadi Fatimah. A strong army group entered the city from the main thoroughfare from the south, via Lit, and occupied *Masfalah*, or the low-town. Maybe it was a cavalry group, and in spite of the detour, synchronized its arrival in the city at the same time as the other detachments; the hypothesis seems to be strengthened by the fact that this detachment was led by Khalid ibn al-Walid, commander of the cavalry corps. Yet another group entered the city from the Hajun road, and closed the escape to Jidda as well as to the Yemen (cf. *Ibn Hisham*, pp. 816-817; *Tabariy*, I, 1635).

(169) As in every other expedition there was a watch-word for the Muslim soldiers even on this occasion (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 818).

(170) The arrangement of the army in ranks and files was done meticulously. A special marshal (*wazi'*) looked after these matters (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 815), and it was through him

that the Prophet executed his instructions. Our author (*ibid*) has preserved a graphic description of the entry of the Muslim army as seen from the heights of the hills of Mecca. In fact, Abu Quhafah (father of Abu Bakr) was still living in Mecca. He had become blind, and when he heard of a foreign attack on the city he took the hand of his grand-daughter and alighted on some prominent point, and asked her to tell him what she noticed. The little girl even noticed how the *wazi'* (marshal) was arranging the ranks, and other details. At last when she told him how people were advancing, he said: "Let us hasten home now, for it is dangerous to be caught by an army on the move.

(171) There was an excellent arrangement for keeping the supreme commander aware of all that was passing in the different detachments. If he found any intervention or instruction necessary, he at once arranged for it. When, during the last stages of the occupation of Mecca, one of the officers remarked to his men that on that day the head of proud Mecca would fall and the city would be plundered, as soon as the Prophet Muhammad came to know of the matter the officer in question was forthwith relieved of his command (*Tabariy*, I, 1636), which was entrusted to another person,[1] and it was said: "No, the honour of Mecca shall increase today, and its sanctity will in no way be violated, as it is there that the Qiblah of Islam is situated." And a general proclamation was issued that complete peace and order should prevail in the town.

(172) The different detachments were formed on the basis of natural division, different tribes constituting different groups. Although the Muslim emigrants of Mecca, the Ansarites of Medina, the Aslamites, the Ghifarites

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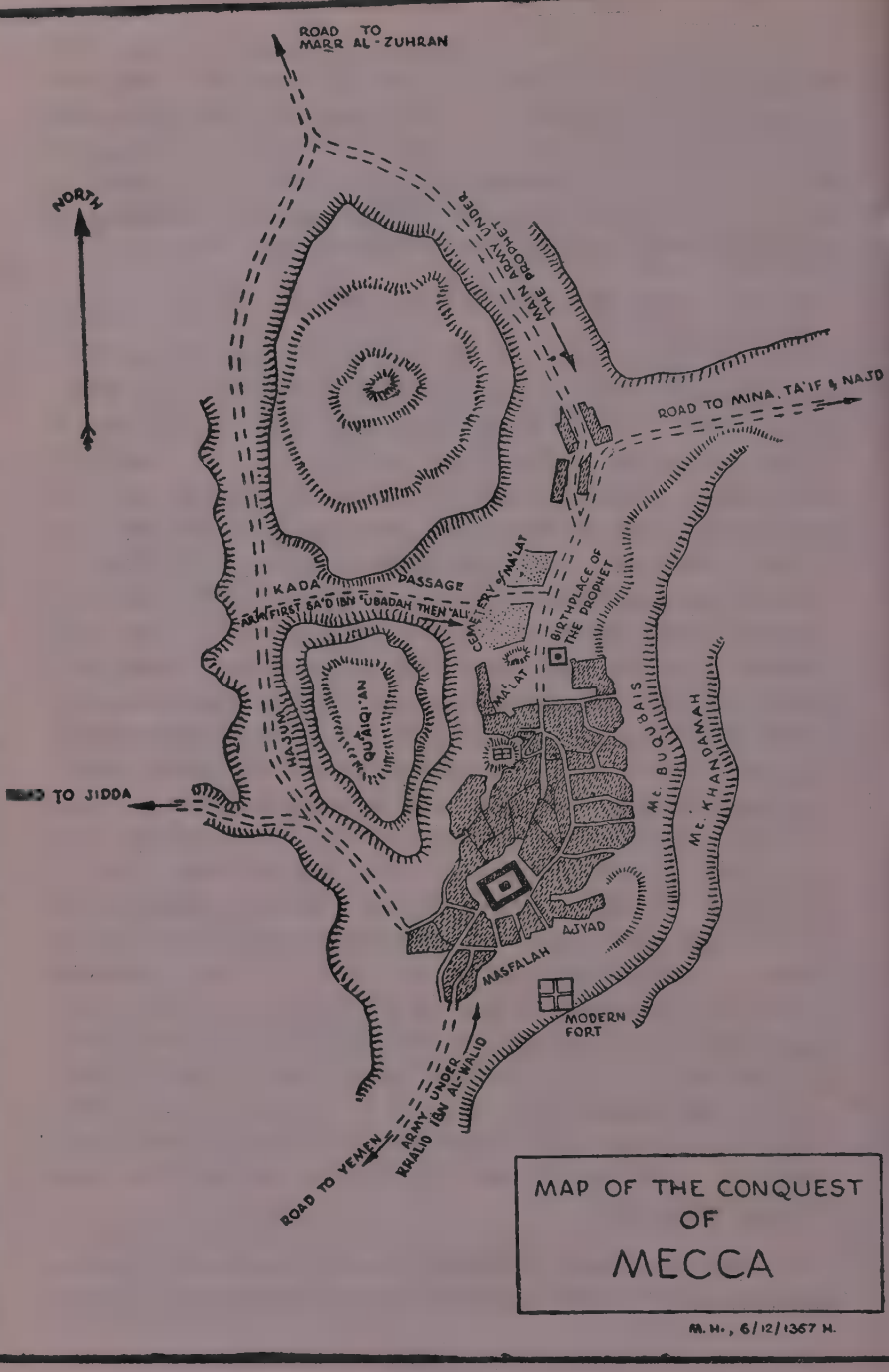
1 This person was no other than the son of the dismissed officer. Such an appointment was apparently motivated sagaciously to diminish the heart-burning of the disgraced commander. Of course also the commander of a certain contingent had to be selected from among the members of the same tribal contingent.

and others, each constituted separate corps, yet they were so co-ordinated that they all worked like different parts of the same machine. This arrangement had the added advantage of making a psychological impression; the number of groups and detachments would not impress the common man in those days as much as the names of tribes which represented the whole of North-Western Arabia.

The entry of the Prophet Muhammad into Mecca

(173) The expatriated Meccan (the Prophet Muhammad, peace be with him) was now triumphantly returning to his birth-place, after eight years of continuous physical and mental torture on the part of his fellow citizen. He was entering at the head of a victorious army, yet in what manner? Like any other tyrant, full of arrogance, forgetting the Almighty, the Cause of all causes, and intoxicated with self-conceit? No, far from it. He was, in fact, entering, in the words of *Ibn Hisham* (p. 815) with excessive modesty and gratitude, prostrating himself repeatedly on the very back of the camel he was riding, before the One God, thankful to Him for all He had vouchsafed, declaring an all-embracing amnesty and peace, in place of any thought of avenging past material or mental afflictions, and in fact demonstrating what God wills of Godly men, viz., "Enter the town and eat of it as you like in plenty, and enter the gate prostrating and say 'Amnesty' " (The Qur'an, 2: 58; 7 :160). As *Tabariy* in his commentary of this verse very well notices (I, 532-533), the immediate recipients of this divine rule of military conduct, the Jews (of the time of Moses, peace be with him !), had fallen far short of what may be expected from the believing and practising Faithful, when they fought against the Amalekites. It was destined for Muhammad, the "Prophet of War", to demonstrate that even in his battles he was the "Prophet of Mercy" (as a Hadith says : *ana Nabiy al-Malhamah, ana Nabiy ar-Ramah* — I am the Prophet of War, I am the Prophet of Mercy).

(174) The Qur'an (48: 24) mentions a particular incident, that after the "victory" a part of the diehards laid an ambush


ROAD TO MARR AL-ZUHRAN
NORTH
MAIN ROAD FROM THE PROPHET'S CAMP
ROAD TO MINA, TA'IF & NAJD
KADA PASSAGE
FIRST SA'D IBN 'UBADAH THEN 'ALI
CEMETERY OF MA'LAT
BIRTHPLACE OF THE PROPHET
MA'LAT
QUAIQI'AN
MT. BUQUBAIS
MT. KHANDAMAH
TO JIDDA
AJYAD
MASFALAH
MODERN FORT
ROAD TO YEMEN
ARMY UNDER KHALID IBN AL-WALID
MAP OF THE CONQUEST OF
MECCA
M. H., 6/12/1357 H.

of particular gravity against the Muslim army inside the very township of Mecca, and reminds the Muslims how God saved them from their implacable enemy. On this occasion, also, the "Prophet of Mercy" pardoned the culprits.

The Prophet Muhammad declares a general amnesty

(175) Immediately after the occupation, the man-made gods were relegated to what they merited. The incident in the house of Abu Sufyan was pathetic. His wife, fearless Hind began to beat and break into pieces the idols in her home, and began to repeat: "How proud we were of you: yet how deceived were we in that belief". The same Hind came veiled before the Prophet with other women of the city to embrace Islam. The dialogue was interesting:

"Do you promise not to kill your infants?"

"We had reared them as children. It was you who killed them in the Battle of Badr!"

"Do you promise not to commit fornication or adultery?"

"Can a free-born woman do that?"

"Do you promise not to steal?".

(176) At this Hind was overwhelmed, and saw that Islam was not a political necessity: it was a code of human life. She said: "O Messenger of God! stealing is really bad; but just think, my husband is very miserly, and for the necessary expenses of maintaining the home I have stolen, from time to time, some money from my husband." The Prophet Muhammad could not help smiling and saying, "All right, that much is not forbidden" (*Tabariy, Ta'rikh*, I, 1643-44; *Suhaily*, II, 277).

(177) We close by mentioning the last gesture of the Prophet in the conquered city. The day following the occupation, when complete peace and order reigned in the city, he

led the congregational prayer, which was attended with curiosity by the Meccan pagans. After the service, Muhammad addressed the assembled citizens in the compound around the Ka'ba and after reminding them of what they had done to him and his disciples, and how unjust they had been, he asked them what they expected of him then? After a short pause he continued:

"No more responsibility burdens you today.

Go, ye are relieved" (*Tabariy*, I, 1642).

Instantaneously Mecca was transformed, and overnight practically the entire population was won over to Islam. Nothing else could have won them so profoundly and sincerely. They were not the inhabitants of a defeated and occupied country, but equals with the victors in rights as well as obligations. When a Messenger of God is the conqueror of a town, nothing less exalted could be expected. A small incident would throw a flood of light on this aspect of the policy. Just before the Prophet Muhammad began his address, Bilal the *Muazzin* had mounted the roof of the Ka'ba and shouted the call of prayer: "God alone is high, God is one . . ." 'Attab Ibn Asid, a Meccan idolater, whispered in the ear of a companion of his, present in the assembly: "Thank God, my father is not alive today to hear this Negro braying like a donkey on the roof of the holy Ka'ba; he would not have been able to support it." A few minutes later, hearing the proclamation of the general amnesty, 'Attab was so overwhelmed, that he spontaneously moved forward, and approaching the Prophet, said: "I am the son of Asid, and I attest that there is no God but God and that thou art His messenger." "Well, I appoint you the governor of Mecca", said the Prophet. As we know, without leaving a single soldier of his to garrison Mecca, the Prophet soon retired to Medina, leaving Mecca governed by a Meccan just converted. He never had to regret this later. This is how human hearts are won!

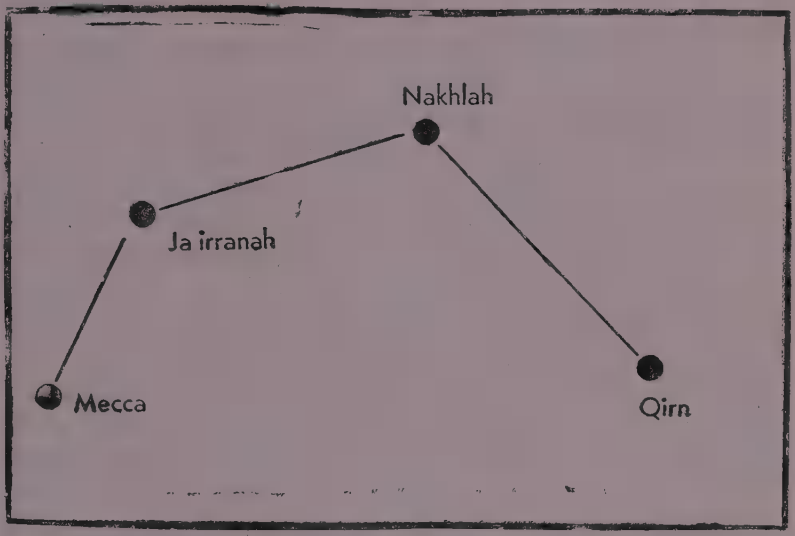
CHAPTER VI

The Battles of Hunain and Ta'if

(Shauwal 8 H./December 629)

The location of Hunain

(178) It is rather curious that the important and famous battlefield of Hunain, whose name has been perpetuated by the Qur'an itself, has gone into oblivion since even the early days of Islam. Classical geographers and chroniclers are unable to locate it exactly. Some, like Maqriziy (in his *Imta'*), place it at a day's journey only from Mecca, that is about 15 miles, while others locate it at as much as four days' journey from the holy city of Islam, where the Prophet Muhammad was staying at the time to consolidate the conquest and integrate it into the polity and economy of the Islamic State. Yet others give the distance between the two.



(179) The reason is not far to seek. Hunain was not a populated place. The Prophet Muhammad was proceeding

to a certain destination, to meet the Hawazinites, when his army was taken unawares by the enemy at the moment of crossing a narrow valley in the early hours of the morning. Apart from this passing incident, neither before nor since has Hunain come into prominence in any connection. It must be an inhospitable region, with no water and no grazing plains to attract even the wandering nomads.

(180) During the last few years, several scholars, such as the late Shakib Arsalan, Ba-Salamah, and others, have tried to discover it. No wonder each has arrived at a different conclusion, with no possibility of reconciling their views. These scholars generally seek it on the main road from Mecca to Ta'if, and do not take into account the fact that it was a military expedition, and, as a general policy, the Prophet Muhammad never followed the ordinary track for fear of warning the enemy in advance of his attack on them.

(181) Ba-Salamah was the fittest person to do the job. As a son of the soil (he was a member of the Sa'udi Parliament at Mecca until his death in 1946) and as an author of a biography (in four volumes) of the Prophet Muhammad, and as one who liked excursions, he knew the region very well. He writes that he spent considerable time in exploring and searching this historic place. He locates Hunain at the present motor road to Najd, at a spot about fifteen miles from Mecca. I followed the track, and I have to confess that I could not find a place where an army of 12,000 strong, as the Prophet Muhammad was then leading, could be ambushed by archers. In doing so, however, I came across the historic well of Dhu 'l-Majaz, where a famous fair used to be held annually before the advent of Islam. The nomadic tribe of the Quraish lives in the neighbourhood, and their girls, in picturesque and artistic dress, uncommon among other nomads of the country, ungrudgingly supplied us with water for our car. This well is on the rather unfrequented track from 'Arafat to the present motor road to Najd, north of 'Arafat. In my earlier visits to the Hijaz, in 1932 and 1939, I had tried to locate Hunain, and once I went by

donkey for about seventy miles on my way to Ta'if, via Mount Kara', enquiring *en route* about Hunain, Awtas and other landmarks mentioned in history in connection with the Battle of Hunain. It was all in vain. I leave it to future investigators, who I hope will be more fortunate than myself.

Hunain was probably situated 30 to 40 miles north-east of the town of Ta'if

(182) A passing remark may, however, be made to a map prepared by the Hijaz Railway Administration in the time of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II. Though not very reliable, this map gives the place as Awtas (with *t* as in *qarashat*, not as in *hutti*, which is the ordinary orthography of the name of the locality in question), and places it north-east of the city of Ta'if, at a distance of about thirty to forty miles. I have not been able to visit this region, yet to me it is the most plausible of all places; wherein to search for Hunain. And this for the following reason.

(183) As remarked previously, and as expressly recorded by all classical authorities (cf. *Ibn Hisham*, p. 894, among others), the Prophet Muhammad used to march, with the solitary exception of the expedition of Tabuk, ostensibly in a misleading direction. He used to make a detour, and after traversing a considerable distance, he used to converge in the direction of his destination, although even then he took precautions not to use frequented tracks but to follow routes least suspected by the enemy. The Prophet Muhammad, after the conquest of Mecca, had come to know of the preparations of tribes of the Hawazin to attack Islamic territory. (Incidentally, the nomads of the Hawazin still live at some distance from Ta'if, and if my informant is correct, somewhere to the north-east of the town of Ta'if. The Prophet Muhammad at once sent an intelligence officer who spent several days in disguise among the Hawazinites, and brought the news of the imminence

of their attack.[1] Thereupon the Prophet Muhammad set out from Mecca to meet the enemy on their own soil.

(184) That Hunain lay only at a day's journey from Mecca is rather doubtful. The arrival of the enemy so close to Mecca and ignorance of the Muslim intelligence service is something not very convincing for the epoch. Even the theory of four days' distance is not convincing either, for the encounter of Hunain was a sort of meeting between the two adversaries midway, and even Ta'if lies at a distance of only two or three days from Mecca on camels. If the territory of the Hawazinites lay even at four days' journey from Mecca, they were on the march, and the encounter of Hunain must have occurred at thirty to forty miles from Mecca.

(185) The battle of Hunain is said to have occurred (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 840) near Mount Awtas, which name has also been forgotten by the present generation. Another detail worth nothing is that the booty of Hunain was left by the Prophet Muhammad at Ja'irranah (still well known about ten miles from Mecca, north-north-east of the holy city) for safe custody, while he pursued the enemy, who were taking shelter in the walled town of Ta'if. The name of Ja'irranah in this connection suggests that Hunain must be searched for in that direction, and not in the neighbourhood of 'Arafat, etc. Anyhow, our sources say, that while pursuing the enemy who were fleeing towards Ta'if, the Prophet Muhammad is said to have passed by Nakhlah-Yamaniyah and reached Liyah (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 872). Ja'irranah, Nakhlah and Qirn make a semi-circle; and Liyah is east-south-east of Ta'if, famous since antiquity and still known as an important suburb of Ta'if, just in the opposite direction of Mecca.

(186) Another thing worth remembering is that the nomadic tribe of the Hawazin still lives at a distance of three

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1 Ibn Hisham, p. 842. Kattaniy, *al-Taratib al-idariyah*, Vol. I, p. 363, refers to a permanently placed secret agent of the Prophet in Awtas, the country of the Hawazinites.

days' journey from Ta'if, as I was assured by my hosts in Ta'if in 1939.

The route of the Prophet Muhammad's march

(187) I think we can now clearly follow the route of the Prophet Muhammad's march. He wanted to prevent the Hawazinites from joining hands with the people of Ta'if. He leaves Mecca, northwards, then north-east, and marching in a semi-circular direction, meets the enemy at Hunain. Here the enemy ambush was at first successful for its unexpectedness, yet the example set by the Prophet Muhammad personally rallied the Muslims, who, recovering from the shock, were more than a match for the enemy. The Hawazinites had no alternative but to take to flight under the shelter of the numerous interwoven zig-zag valleys, defying any pursuit. The enemy had brought with them not only their womenfolk and children but also the entirety of their herds of sheep and camels, thinking, as the chroniclers record, that they would tie them up to fight unto death or victory. This was not to be so in the face of the seasoned and disciplined Muslim army, who made booty of all their women, children and herds. The Prophet sent the booty towards Mecca, to be kept at Ja'irranah, under the custody of an officer (Ibn Hajar, *Isabah*, No. 2066) for leisurely disposal. Proceeding in the same semicircular fashion, he reached Liyah, east-south-east of Ta'if, and destroyed a fortress there (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 872). This prosperous garden-village had great economic value, and its loss was grievous to the people of Ta'if. Thereafter, the Prophet Muhammad laid siege to the walled town of Ta'if itself, from a side where a spacious terrain allowed camping and manoeuvring. The graveyard of the Muslim martyrs of this battle, near the actual grand mosque of Ibn 'Abbas, indicates where the Muslim army had pitched its tents.

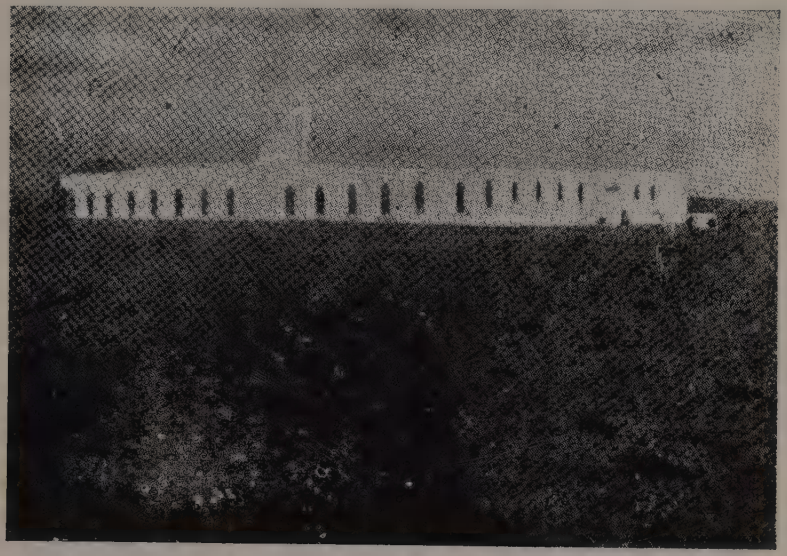
Ta'if

(188) Ta'if is situated on the Wadi-Wajj, a seasonal river flowing only after a rainfall, which surrounds about half of the

walled city. It is a summer station, about 3,000 ft. above sea-level. There are three routes from Mecca to reach it. The nearest passes by 'Arafat, and climbing Mount Kara', the donkeys, who alone dare to cross this route about fifty to sixty miles in length, take about twenty hours on the journey. One may leave Mecca late in the afternoon, halt at midnight on the base of Kara', begin the uphill march early next morning and by mid-day one arrives in Ta'if. Another route, traversed by camels, via Ja'irranah, is not personally known to me. The third alternative, via Wadi-Na'man and Masil, is used now (1939) by motor transport, and its seventy to seventy-five miles are covered in about three hours. The valleys are even and spacious, and there is hardly any difficult point to cross.

(189) Like other towns in ancient Arabia, old Ta'if consisted originally of several villages, each at a distance of from one furlong or two to a mile or more, and each inhabited by a clan or tribe. Each such habitation or village had its own gardens and cultivated lands as well as fortresses and watch-towers. The ruins of many such villages were seen by the writer in 1939. These gardens and farms were irrigated by the Wadi-Wajj, which passes through these villages, just below the walled town of Ta'if. The Wadi-Wajj drains very soon the rainwater of the region, and generally the river-bed remains dry all through the year. However, the sub-soil of the country is rich in water deposits, and a sort of tube-well, used in olden days, is still very much in use. These tube-wells supply water to canals, which suffice to irrigate local gardens and farms.

(190) In days of yore, a certain chieftain was able to acquire the favour of a satrap of Persia, who sent an engineer to help the chief construct a veritable fort, a walled town with ramparts. The adjective *ta'if* (literally: with a wall around) soon became the proper name of the town (*cf. Aghani*, Vol. 12, pp. 48–49). The rest of the locality, in its collectivity, was called Wajj, which sometimes included even the walled town of Ta'if. The fertility of the region must have attracted people from different places, and the original inhabitants of the



Mosque of Ibn 'Abbas, Ta'if

Fort of Ta'if (1939)

place seem to have been liberal enough to receive them as allies. So, at the dawn of Islam, we come across in Ta'if (or Wajj) two distinct populations — the Banu Malik and the Ahlaf (literally allies).

(191) According to local traditions, subsisting to our day, the temples of Lat and 'Uzza were also situated inside the walled town. In place of one of these, I was shown in 1939 a Government guest-house, or official hotel, and in place of the other a big private house had been erected.

(192) The actual wall of Ta'if dates only from Turkish times, yet at least part of it must have been erected on the foundations of the old one. For the graves of the martyrs of the Prophet Muhammad's time, those who fell at the siege of Ta'if, are still shown near the grand mosque of ibn Abbas, just below the wall of the town. (Zaid ibn Thabit, the Prophet's chief amanuensis, was also later buried in the same graveyard). And *Ibn Hisham* (p. 872) is explicit that the Prophet's camp was erected where the (Ibn Abbas) Mosque is to be found. (And that exists even now).

A description of war implements used by the Prophet Muhammad

(193) There were few fortified places in Arabia; so a siege was something rather uncommon for the armies of early Islam. After the forts of Khaibar, Ta'if was the second occasion on which the Prophet Muhammad had to encounter a walled town offering resistance. Muslims had suffered in Khaibar by the catapult (*manjaniq*) shots. Taking a lesson from the same, the Prophet Muhammad is reported (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 872; *Tabariy*, I, 1672) to have used catapults himself in this siege for shooting stones, and covered cars (*dabbabah*, *dabur*, and *arradah*, or hand-driven tanks) against the fort of Ta'if. Moreover, Baladhuriy in his *Ansab al-Ashraf* (I, 366, ed., Cairo), assures us that the *manjaniq* (catapult) used in Ta'if was constructed by Salman al-Farsiy, and that the *dabbabah*

(covered car) was brought from JRSH (see infra) by Khalid Ibn Sa'id. However, according to *Ibn Sa'd* (II/I, p. 114), it was the Dausite at-Tufail Ibn 'Amr who had brought a covered car as well as a catapult. Names may differ, yet the facts not contradicted. There is however, a story in *Ibn Hisham* (p. 869) that two Thaqifites of Ta'if, Ghailan Ibn Salamah and 'Urwah Ibn Mas'ud, did not take part in the Battle of Ta'if, "since they both had gone to JRSH (see below) to learn the manufacture of covered cars and catapults", and that when they returned, the siege was already over. In narrating the same incident, *Ibn Sa'd* (I/ii, p. 52) is more explicit, and he adds that they were yet non-Muslims, and it was only then that they thought of embracing Islam. Does this mean that in order to pay the Prophet Muhammad in his own coin, the Ta'ifites had also thought of arming themselves with these war-machines? They could certainly use the catapults against the besieging Muslim army, yet of what use were the covered cars? They could hardly be used in a frontal attack of hand-to-hand fighting. Maybe they learnt the manufacture of covered cars for any future contingency, or learning for the sake of learning, to be used, to sell, to export to clients other than their own co-citizens. As to the Prophet Muhammad, he may even have possessed one or two catapults, captured as war booty in the campaign of Khaibar the previous year; and Salman could either have repaired them or copied a model. Nevertheless, it is evident that the use of only one or two catapults of small calibre could not be very effective against a large besieged township. In fact their use did not suffice to reduce Ta'if to surrender, which did not lack defenders or stocks of food. On the other hand, the arrows and red-hot nails of the enemy gave rise to several casualties in the besieging Muslim army (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 873). These red-hot nails pierced the hides covering the tanks used by the Muslim soldiers, and it was impossible to continue the work of demolishing the city wall by breaching it from outside in the face of this defence measure.

(194) Although the enemy were not disposed to come out for a hand-to-hand fight, yet the arrows shot by them from

ramparts would sometimes take toll of the besiegers, especially when they were off guard in the camp during the night. In Baladhuriy's *Ansab* (I, 367), it is mentioned that "the Prophet had with him *khashab* (wood, planks) which he erected around his camp during the siege of Ta'if (cf. also *Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 114).

(195) When the siege dragged on and did not have the desired effect, the Prophet Muhammad wanted to resort to economic pressure and threatened that he would destroy the vineyards outside the walled town, belonging to some of the chieftains of Ta'if, and which produced some rare and fine qualities of grape (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 873). The enemy was greatly perturbed, and asked the Prophet Muhammad to take them as booty rather than destroy them. The Prophet revoked his order, for the destruction of vineyards had no immediate practical value.

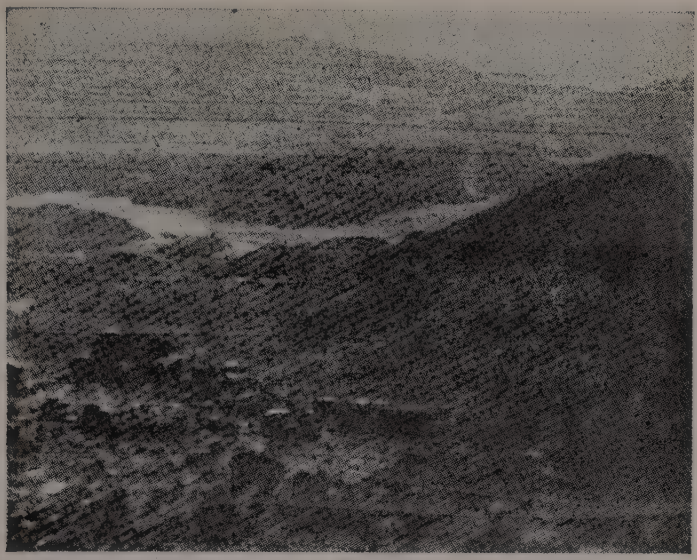
(196) The Prophet Muhammad announced, as another form of pressure, that whatever enemy slave embraced Islam and took refuge in the Muslim camp would be considered as a free Muslim (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/1, pp. 114-115; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 874). Several cases of this kind occurred on this occasion, and the order has been incorporated in Islamic jurisprudence as a rule of permanent force (cf. § 217 below).

(197) In connection with the tactics of those days, it is interesting to recall that the Prophet strewed wooden thorned balls and fresh branches of thorn trees all around the walled town which he besieged apparently to prevent all ingress (of Provisions in men and material) and egress, in connection with a night attack or otherwise (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 114; Waqidiy, *Maghazi*, fol. 228b, MS. British Museum).

(198) After a siege of forty days (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/1, p. 115), the Prophet decided to retire, and to resort to political weapons instead of steel and fire and frontal attack; and as we shall see, this confidence in other methods was fully justified by later events.

The identification of JRSH

(199) We have had occasion to refer previously (§ 193) to a place called JRSH. Is it Jurash or Jarsh? According to *Ibn Hisham* (p. 954) Jurash was a town south of Ta'if provided with a protective wall (*madinah mughlaqah*; literally, a locked, or a closed town) and peopled by some tribes of Yamanite origin. The region is well known to Arab geographers, who all mention it as forming part of the Yaman. What, however, intrigues us is the fact that this petty and primitive township should be so much in advance of Mecca, Medina and even Ta'if as to boast of a thriving industry of war machines, where people could not only purchase catapults and hand-driven tanks and covered cars, but also actually learn their manufacture. It is not very reasonable to think that the Prophet Muhammad sent emissaries to far-off Jarsh, in Transjordania, in the Byzantine territory. It is all very well to argue that Jarsh was the right place for an industry. Its ruins still betoken today its former grandeur and prosperity. Yet it is well known that export of war gear to Bedouin territory was strictly forbidden by the Byzantine Government. Moreover, only a few months earlier there had been actual fighting at Mu'tah between the Muslim army and the Byzantine army, with great loss to the Muslims; and it was unthinkable for Muslims to try to purchase war machines there, more so in view of the difficulties of transporting them to far-off Ta'if, requiring over a month's journey in each direction. Again, if we take into consideration the narration that even Ta'ifites had sent emissaries to that place for a similar purpose, a nearby place is more plausible than Jarsh in Transjordania, the resources and funds at the disposal of Ta'ifites being very insignificant compared with those of the Muslim State. It is further to recall that the emissaries of the Prophet Muhammad, who are said to have brought these machines, hailed from the Yamanite tribe of Azd, and their wielding an influence in the Yamanite town of Jurash is more plausible than in the Byzantine territory, where they were looked upon with suspicion and treated with contempt. The Yamanites were culturally more advanced than the people



Valleys on the road Mecca-Ta'if

Grave Yard of Ta'if where Zain ibn Tha'bit's tomb stands (1939)

of Hijaz, and it is not very difficult to believe that they had not only erected a crude wall around their village, but also that some of its inhabitants, maybe Jews or Christians, practised the profession of carpenter and could manufacture some simple light catapults and covered cars. If Salman al-Farsiy could himself manufacture one — and he was not a professional carpenter as far as we know from his biographies — why should we deny the people of Jurash the credit of being equally versed in the art? Although the late Indian Muslim savant, Shibli Nu'mani, thinks, in a stray remark, that this refers to Jarsh in Transjordania, I am persuaded to believe that he has not taken into consideration these different facts. In fact, he never discusses the point in his great work, *Sirat al-Nabi* (Vol. II, p. 77, 2nd ed.), but simply says that this refers to Jarsh in Syria (Transjordania).

The Prophet Muhammad's treatment of the defeated Hawazinites

(200) Anyhow, the Prophet Muhammad decided to return to Mecca, and *en route* he made a halt at Ja'irranah and divided the booty of Hunain and Awtas among his soldiers.

(201) The defeated Hawazinites had provided the foster-mother to the Prophet at his birth. So they knew that, if they were no longer anti-Islamic, they had nothing to fear from the child they had nursed. Therefore they came to Ja'irranah, and embraced Islam. The Prophet Muhammad said: "I refrained from distributing the booty for these long weeks only in the hope that you would become repentant, and that I could return to you your families and your herds. It is too late now to return to you all that once belonged to you, as it is already distributed. However, select one of the two things, your families or your herds, and I shall see what I can do." They selected their women and children. The Prophet said: "The portion of your families attributed as booty to me and to my family is returned to you; as for others, ask me in public, when I have concluded the congregational prayer." They did so. The

Prophet repeated that he had liberated what he and his family had received. Abu Bakr and 'Umar and other prominent leaders followed suit one after the other, and with the exception of one or two clans, all the Muslim soldiers liberated *gratis* the enslaved Hawazinites. Even for the hot-headed and greedy, the Prophet commanded that they should surrender their human booty, for which, however they would be compensated from the State treasury (Ibn Hisham, p. 877 ff).

(202) This meant that Ta'if was deprived of its last ally in Hawazin. The Islamic influence around Ta'if was already strong, and it now increased by leaps and bounds. The market of Mecca was under Muslim control, the only market for Ta'if's products. Perhaps the caravans of Ta'if could no more travel beyond the limits of their own city. Probably the annual fair of 'Ukaz was also closed to the Ta'ifites.[1] The result was that in less than a year after the siege the Ta'ifites sent a delegation to Medina and declared to the Prophet their spiritual as well as political surrender; and by relieving themselves from the slavery of their own handicraft, the idols of Lat and 'Uzza, they realized that God was One, and that worship belonged to Him alone. As Muslims, their talents were immediately utilized by the Prophet Muhammad, who recruited governors and others from among them for various parts of the State, and they proved useful in the spread and consolidation of Islam for the wise policy the Prophet Muhammad constantly upheld, viz., respect for human blood and generosity towards the vanquished.

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1 It is significant that in the subsequent treaty concluded between Ta'if and the Muslim Government, § 5 speaks of the interest of Ta'ifites in the fair of 'Ukaz as a sort of concession. For the text see Abu Ubaid, *Amwal*, § 506 (or my *Watha'iq*, N° 181; my *Corpus des Documents*, N° 160.

CHAPTER VII

Wars with the Jews

The expulsion of the Jewish tribes from Medina

(203) It is a tragedy for humanity that the Jews, who have so much in common with the Muslims, could not pull together with the Prophet Muhammad. Without going into the details of the origin of their hostility with the Muslim State, it should be remembered that the first to clash militarily were the Banu Qainuqa, of Medina. They were goldsmiths by profession, lived in the heart of the city, and through their famous *Suq* (market) seem to have controlled the foreign trade of the city. They possessed no cultivated lands, yet there is mention of several of their fortresses, in which they resisted the siege for about two weeks. The reason for the war (dishonouring shamefully a Muslim lady) as well as their relations with other Jews of the city had been such that nobody came to their help. They surrendered unconditionally and the Prophet Muhammad was content to order them to emigrate somewhere else (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 546). Even at such an early date as the year 2 A.H.—623 C.E., the Prophet appointed an expulsion officer to supervise their emigration (*Tabariy*, I, 1361). Although only a few furlongs from his home, during the siege the Prophet Muhammad had left a deputy in the Muslim town (*Ibid*).

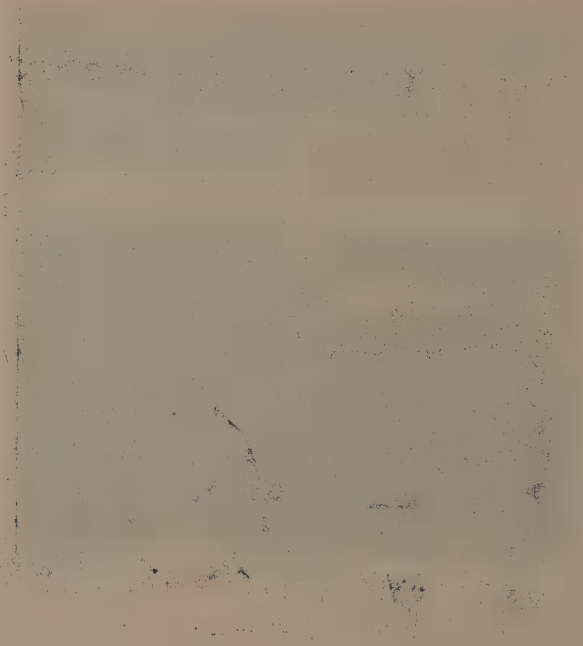
(204) The following year, another Jewish group of Medina, the Banu an-Nadir, rendered themselves guilty of a culpable crime. The very idea of the possibility of an Ishmaelian prophet was repugnant to the instinct of an Israelite. The Muslim victory at Badr added jealousy to antipathy. The expulsion of the criminal Jews of Banu Qainuqa' created

apprehensions. Some other measures taken by the Prophet against some criminal individuals of the Jewish faith overflooded their patience. So, according to classical sources (Muslim 32/62 and 116; 33/22; Abu Dawud 19/23; commentary of the Quran by 'Abd ibn Humaid, and the Hadith work of Ibn Marduyeh both cited by Samhudiy, *Wafa' al-Wafa'*, 2nd ed. p. 298), they sent an invitation to the Prophet: "Come to us along with three of thy companions (30, according to Abu Dawud), and three of our rabbis will discuss religious questions with thee. If these are satisfied, all of us shall embrace thy religion". These rabbis had concealed daggers in their cloaks, and wanted to assassinate the Prophet. An Arab lady was married since long to one of these Jews; she sent secretly word to her brother, an Ansarite Muslim, who communicated the news to the Prophet when he had already set out for the village of the Banu'n-Nadir. The Prophet returned back, and next morning invaded their township with his squadrons. They lived in the south-eastern suburbs of Medina. Their number seems to have been between two to three thousand all told. The Prophet camped in such a place that the Banu Quraizah (further south in 'Awali) were cut off from Banu 'an-Nadir. The Mosque of al-Fadikh, also known as the Mosque of the Sun, commemorates even today the place where the Prophet had pitched his tent during the siege. The beleaguered Jews lived in an oasis, and under the shelter of their palm-groves could harry the Muslim army with impunity. So, instead of a tent of cloth or leather, it is related that the Prophet Muhammad had a hut of wooden planks constructed for himself as a protection against enemy arrows (Sha'miy, *Sirah in loco*). The Qur'an has also recorded that the Muslims hewed down some of the enemy date-palms, perhaps in order to be able to attack them. Cut off from all replenishment of provisions, the besieged soon became exhausted, and surrendered. The Prophet again consented to allow them safe emigration together with all their movable property, weapons excepted (*Ibn Hisham*, 653). He even allowed them to recover their debts from Muslim clients, and in cases of long-term transaction they could encash by

Qasr (palace) of Ka'b b. al-Asharaf with water reservoir below

Ruins of Banu Quraizah

Prophet's Camping Ground on arrival in Khaibar



reducing what they had advanced (Sarakhsiy, *Sharh Siyar Kabir*, Vol. III, p. 229). They left Medina on 600 camels (*Maqriziy, Imta*, Vol. I, p. 181; *Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 41), and most of them settled in Khaibar, and, perhaps naturally, indulged in intrigues against the Muslim State, with consequences presently to be described. No wonder they wanted to hide their shame and pain on quitting Medina, and so they went out of the city with music and songs (Tabariy, I: 1452; *Ibn Hisham*, p. 653).

(205) The village inhabited by the Banu Qainuqa', is nowadays (1939) a flat plain, without trace even of ruins. In the former village of the Banu an-Nadir, however, the ruins of the fortified palace of Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf have come down to this day, and offer the possibility of studying pre-Islamic military architecture in Medina. In the territory ascribed to the Banu an-Nadir, towards the south in the eastern lava plain, near Wadi Mudhainib, there is a small hillock. On this, the walls of the palace of Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf still stand, about a yard and a quarter in height, built of stone. Inside the palace there is a well, which apparently served in time of siege and other dangers. In front of the palace, on the base of the hillock, there are ruins of a big cistern of water, built of lime and divided into several sections, each connected with the other by means of clay pipes. Probably this served for herds of cattle.

The Banu Quraizah

(206) From the point of view of strategy and tactics, we know even less regarding the last of the Jewish wars in Medina, that of the Banu Quraizah. Of all the Jewish tribes, living in Medina as the clients of different Arab tribes, the Banu Quraizah were the humblest, and the Jews of the Banu'n-Nadir tyrannized them. So if a Nadirite killed a Quraizite, the murderer had to pay only half the customary blood-money. Among other disabilities. When the Prophet came to Medina, he abolished this injustice, accorded the Quraizites complete equality with other Jews, and treated them favourably. Instead of gratitude, we see that when a war broke out between

Muslims and the Nadirite Jews (cf § 204), the Quraizites began preparations to stab the Muslims in the back, the camp of the Muslims being in-between the villages of the Nadirites and the Quraizites. So, (according to Bukhari 64/14, Muslim 32/62 N° 1766, and Abu Dawud 19/23), after only one day, the Prophet raised the siege of the Nadirites and turned completely to the Quraizites, who seeing their weekness, solicited peace, and promised not to help the Nadirites. The Prophet was satisfied, and then returned to the Nadirites, with the result mentioned above. Two years later, in the Islamo-Meccan war of the Ditch (cf § 148 supra), the Quraizites again turned traitors. Naturally the Muslims found it desirable to deal with them once for all. So the day following the departure of the besiegers of the Ditch the Prophet Muhammad went to lay siege to the Banu Quraizah. After some weeks of resistance they despaired, and surrendered on condition that an arbitrator of their own choice should decide their fate. The Prophet agreed. The arbitrator nominated by the Quraizites decreed that they should be treated in the same way as the Bible provided for the enemy defeated by the Jews (Deuteronomy, 20: 13-14).

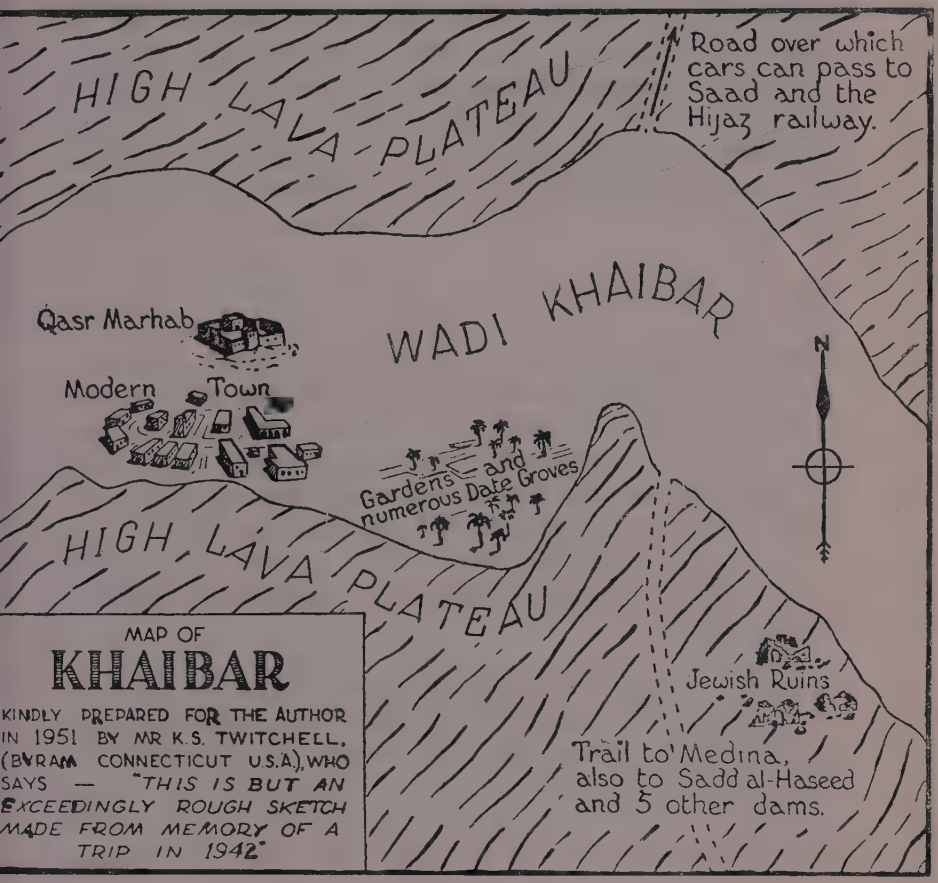
(207) Of their booty, the fifth part came to the central exchequer, and was, according to Sha'miy (in his *Sirah in loco*), spent on purchasing arms and horses in Syria and Najd.

(208) We have seen previously how the Banu Qainuqa' were expelled from Medina in the year 623 C.E. It is curious that references are made to them in Medina, etc., several times afterwards. First of all, the Banu Qainuqa' offer themselves (cf supra § 90) to fight along with the Muslims at the Battle of Uhud against the Quraish in the year 3 A.H.— 624 C.E. (*Ibn Sa'd*, 2/1, p. 34). Then, they help the Muslims in their fight against the Jews of Banu Quraizah (Sarakhsiy, *Mabsut*, Vol. X, p. 23). That these did not refer to the Qainuqa'ites having embraced Islam is borne out clearly at the reference of their fight alongside the Muslims against Khaibar (Baihaqiy, *as-Sunan al-Kubra*, Vol. IX, p. 53), where it is explicitly mentioned that being non Muslims they received only

reward out of the booty, and not a regular "share". Apparently all those clans, who had not taken part in protecting their criminal brethren and did not side with them when they were besieged by the Muslims were left by the Prophet Muhammad to remain in Medina and carry on their peaceful vocations.

KHAIBAR etc.

(209) For all editions of this book prior to 1964 whichever the language, my description of Khaibar was based on hearsay evidence. Not having been able to visit Khaibar personally, I had to rely on old historical data or else on the report


HIGH LAVA PLATEAU
Road over which cars can pass to Saad and the Hijaz railway.
WADI KHAIBAR
Qasr Marhab
Modern Town
Gardens and numerous Date Groves
N
HIGH LAVA PLATEAU
Jewish Ruins
Trail to Medina, also to Sadd al-Haseed and 5 other dams.
MAP OF
KHAIBAR
KINDLY PREPARED FOR THE AUTHOR IN 1951 BY MR K.S. TWITCHELL, (BYRAM CONNECTICUT U.S.A.), WHO SAYS — "THIS IS BUT AN EXCEEDINGLY ROUGH SKETCH MADE FROM MEMORY OF A TRIP IN 1942"

of the agricultural survey of Saudi Arabia prepared by Mr. K.S. Twitchell; and had benefitted also by a kind private letter of the latter to me who had also furnished me with a rough sketch map of Khaibar region. All these documents were useful, yet no report equals a personal visit. In 1964 I was able to pay a one-day visit to Khaibar during the hot month of June, and hence I re-write this section for the present edition. In the hope of another, more prolonged visit, the provisional results are herewith submitted to the benefit of my readers.

(210) Both Madinah and Khaibar are situated in lava plains, yet there looks to be a great difference between the two, Madinah is a *jawf*, a vast plain — one day's journey on camel in length, and as much in breadth — whereas there is a plateau or tableland covered by lava in the midst of which there is a sudden and very deep breach, a valley scarcely a kilometre wide, and that is Khaibar, at least the cultivated part of the locality. On the tableland there is a vast plain extending over long kilometres, where there are ruins of innumerable buildings. Here and there one sees a small piece of land spared by lava, and it may have been cultivated in those by-gone times. The geography of Yaqut assures us that there were in Khaibar only seven forts, but Ibn Is'haq and Ibn Sa'd are very clear to say that there were innumerable forts in that locality, both in the valley and on the tableland; and the present ruins bear testimony to the truth of these latter. May be Yaqut means that there were seven military regions in Khaibar, each with a group of forts and also agricultural lands, pastures, etc. In fact Maqriziy (I, 312) uses the formula "The fort of Na'im was in Natat", along with several other names of forts in Natat.

(211) There is a good asphalt road linking Turkey, Syria and Jordan with Madinah, Mecca and 'Arafat (and localities further south). This road passes through Tabuk and Khaibar. So we left by car after the *'asr* prayer, halted in a big village for *maghrib prayer*, and passed the night there. It is a fertile oasis, and we were assured that half of the plain has sources

Ruins of Khaibar forts, a panorama of the plateau

A ruin in Khaibar plateau

of sweet water, and in the other half the wells contain nothing but bitter undrinkable water. I thought of discovering Fadak, but this name is unknown in the region. After the morning prayer we started again, and in about three hours, we arrived in Khaibar. The new motor road from Medina leaves Uhud on the left, approaches the lake 'Aqul — close to the new air-port — and then enters the unending and extremely picturesque valleys and lava plains. It is like Lebanon, except that there is neither verdure nor water. This lava plain continues almost upto the valley of Khaibar. To one arriving from Madinah, just before he reaches the township of Khaibar, there is a trail to the right side and leads to numerous ruins and also to several water dams which are in dilapidated condition. The expanding pilgrim traffic — hundreds of cars go to Mecca from France, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Syria — has brought prosperity to the neglected Khaibar, which has the bad reputation of Malaria also. So the expanding urbanity is also taking its toll, and new houses are being erected in which there is yet no hinderance to demolish an old ruin and reutilize its stones. As said there are very numerous traces of former buildings on the plateau, but to a non-technician like me it is not possible to say whether they concern a civil house or a fortified military post. They extend over an area of several kilometres. This distance of about a hundred kilometres from Madinah was formerly covered by camels in four days.

(212) As the plateau is cut through by a deep valley, it is natural that there are numerous springs in the valley, and irrigate the date-palms and other agricultural or horticultural farms. An old description of Khaibar that in one of the farms there were 12,000 date-palms, — and even as much as forty thousand in the Katibah farm alone, according to Maqriziy, I, 320 — is not at all exaggerated seeing what exists even to-day. In the valley, surrounded by these farms — where in the month of June the dates were not yet ripe — there is a steep hill which is still called Qasr Marhab. According to classical historians, Marhab was one of the principal chieftains of Khaibar, and that this fort was found in the valley an-Natat.

and that just below this fort there was the mosque of the Prophet, constructed on the spot where he had pitched his tent during his stay at Khaibar after the conquest. This tallies with the present topography, and the big mosque is also there. Of course the old fort of Marhab on top of the hill does no more exist, and it is replaced by a modest house, which the Saudian governor now occupies. Of course it is the healthiest spot in the valley, and is situated in a commanding position.

(213) Two points are to note. On the edge of the plateau, just before the down-hill road in the valley of Khaibar, there are ruins of a mosque attributed to the Prophet, and it is quite reasonable that, coming from Madinah, the Prophet first occupied this point and installed there his camp. It is in a commanding place, and from there one can harass with arrows people down in the valley. Another point is a bit intriguing : the old graveyard lies not near this old mosque, but down in the valley, just near the end of the township, when the road mounts again to the plateau to go to Tabuk. What happened to the Muslims killed during the battles fought for the occupation of the forts on the plateau? Has their grave-yard disappeared, or were the martyrs unearthed and all brought together at the end of the war to be buried in the grave-yard that now exists? Anyhow it is quite possible, and even plausible that the Muslims launched an attack, at different occasions, from different points of the plateau or the valley, and even simultaneously from different directions.

(214) Reverting to the time of the Prophet, we have just seen that the Jews of Banu n-Nadir of Madinah had mostly immigrated into Khaibar. There they began immediately to organize all the anti-Islamic forces: of Meccans, the Ghatafanites and others, which resulted in the famous siege of Madinah in the battle of Khandaq. (See above § 116 ff). The pact at Hudaibiyah with the Meccans left the Prophet with hands free to deal with the growing danger at Khaibar. The Meccans had agreed to remain neutral in case the Muslims attacked a third party, for instance Khaibar. The tribes of

Ghatafan and Fazarah persisted in helping their allies of Khaibar, and in fact they rushed with four thousand men to Khaibar when they learnt that the Prophet Muhammad was leading an army there. The Prophet changed tactics, made as if his goal was not Khaibar, but Ghatafan and Fazarah themselves, in revenge for their active part in the siege of the Ditch (Khandaq). They soon returned from Khaibar to their homes in order to defend their families and herds of cattle, and when the Prophet became sure that they would move out no more, he continued his march against Khaibar. Previously he had offered part of the date harvest of Madinah if the Ghatafanites remained neutral during the Khaibar campaign, but then they had refused. Sha'miy in his *Sirah* records that these greedy people came after the conquest of Khaibar to demand of the Prophet the "promised" quantity of dates, but naturally they were then rebuffed and expulsed. Reverting to the campaign of Khaibar, one morning when the people of that locality had left their homes as usual with their tools and agriculture and herds of cattle for the day's work, they saw Muslim army arriving. Hurriedly they returned to their fortified strongholds for defence.

(215) According to Muslim historians, the fort Na'im was the first to surrender. There must have been a fortified tower, since it is related that a mill-stone was hurled down from above and a Muslim soldier was mortally wounded. Qamus is said to have been the biggest of the local forts, and belonged to the family of Abu 'l-Huqaiq. This came next. Then came the turn of ash-Shiqq and of an-Natat, and it is related that the Qasr Marhab was in the region of an-Natat, that down in the valley and not on the plateau. According to Ibn Hisham, Marhab was a Himyarite, from Yaman. He descended for a hand to hand fight, and Ibn Hisham gives a graphic description: There was a tree of *'ushar* with long branches so low and so full of leaves that a man on one side could not see the other on the other side. Marhab and his Muslim opponent, 'Ali, turned round and round around the tree in pursuit of one

another, and each time when one gave a blow a branch was cut. But gradually there remained only the trunk of the tree, and the combat came soon to an end, Marhab falling. Soon Yasir, brother of Marhab advanced to challenge, and he too fell at the hand of another Muslim. According to our old sources, the Dar Bani Qimmah, (which is unknown today) is said to have belonged to this Yasir. Apparently it was a store-house or a shop of alimentary products. The historians say that its capture was of great utility to Muslim army, which had begun to suffer from the long drawn campaign. Then came the turn of al-Katibah; and al-Watih and as-Sulalim were the last to fall and took as much as two week's siege. According to some historians, when the defenders were pushed out from one fortified place, they withdrew in the next house and continued resistance.

(216) Names of other forts are also mentioned. There was Wajdah, which one met the first when coming from Madinah (apparently on the plateau). Again the fort as-Sa'b which belonged to a certain Jew az-Zubair. According to Sha'miy (*Sirah*, chapter Khaibar), this fort possessed a secret underground passage connecting the inside of the fort with the outside region (apparently at the edge of the plateau). The Prophet Muhammad learnt of its existence from a local Jew, and not only rewarded him in a handsome manner after the easy capture of the fort, but also later when a group of women was made prisoners, wherein there was the wife of this Jew also, she was returned to her husband, (Maqriziy, I, 312). The sources say that some of the forts possessed catapults (manjaniq) to discharge stones on the besiegers, yet with little avail. According to Maqriziy (I, 312) a catapult which was captured at the conquest of a fort in the region of Natat was soon used by the Muslims against the fort Nizar. Having seen on the spot, the steep hill, on the summit of which stood the fort Marhab, I have not the least doubt as to the narration of the chroniclers that its capture required the toughest of battles. 'Ali was the hero of that day too. No historian omits to note that to pro-

A ruin in Khaibar plateau

An oasis in Khaibar valley

tect him against arrows and stones and all else flung on him during the assault, 'Ali had held in his hand a big door plucked from a local fortified house, which he threw away after the capture of the Qasr Marhab; and that that door was so heavy that later as much as eight persons could not raise it. No wonder if the exploit later became legendary, and the number of men unable to raise the door swelled to forty and even seventy, (Maqriziy, I, 314, 315).

(217) One day during the war a shepherd from Khaibar, who was a slave of black race, came to the Prophet and embraced Islam. Ibn Hisham (p. 669-670) reports that the Prophet then directed him : "Return the herd to thy Jewish master, as Islam does not allow breach of trust". The shepherd conducted the herd of sheep and goats to the fort of his master, and just near the gate frightened them. According to their habit, the animals went back themselves to the house of their master, and the slave returned to the Muslim camp as a freed man (for reasons explained above in § 196). According to Maqriziy (I, 312-3), this shepherd was of black race, that his name was Yasar, and that after the conversion he took at once part so zealously in the war against the Khaibar people that he fell martyr in the battle.

(218) Of the booty, Maqriziy (*Imta'*, I, 325) records a noble practice of the Prophet : He returned all the copies of the Bible captured to the Jews, once the resistance ended and peace restored.

(219) The Muslim army consisted of sixteen hundred men all told, including two hundred horsemen, according both to Ibn Hisham and Ibn Sa'd ; (but in another report Ibn Sa'd says that there were only one hundred horses). Be that what it may, but the enemy disposed, according to al-Ya'qubiy (II, 56), of twenty thousand—though according to Maqriziy (I, 310) ten thousand—combatants and had the further advantage of being on the defence and in their fortifications. According to Ibn Sa'd, all ended with 15 Muslims and 93 Khaibarians killed

in the battle. Of course it was the primary duty of the Muslim government, after the annexation of the territory to the Islamic State, not only to protect the legitimate interests of the new subjects—which it did scrupulously, see below—but also to see that security continues to reign. Among the Banu 'n-Nadir Jews of Madinah there is question of a municipal treasury for exigencies of unexpected common needs, such as wars, blood money, etc. When the Nadirites left Madinah, they settled in Khaibar and brought their treasury also to Khaibar. We have seen above the role these Jews had played in the siege of Khandaq. So after the capitulation of Khaibar, the Prophet demanded the surrender of the same to the new municipality. The old guardian swore that the whole amount had exhausted in wars. The Prophet replied: I am prepared to believe you, but if it appears later that you have lied, you shall forfeit your life and security. Historians record that the treasury was later discovered on the report of a local Jew, with its logical consequences. Maqriziy (I, 320) gives not only the details of the precious objects contained in a bag made of camel skin, but also what implies the permissibility of the third degree methods. So he says, after having discovered the municipal treasury concealed in a ruin, the Prophet wanted to know what else these persons had still secretly in their possession, and further sums were thus recovered from them after a little torture.

(219/a) The most detailed description of the campaign of Khaibar is found in the Maqriziy's *Imta'*, vol. 1. We shall glean here points of military interest: Coming from Madinah, the Prophet first attacked the region of Natat, but for about ten days he did not camp on the spot: he camped in a relatively secure (and apparently far off) place called ar-Raji', where he passed the night, and came only during the day time to Natat (p. 311, 312, 316). The Prophet suffered from megrim (head trouble) in the beginning of the campaign (p. 311). The watch-word for Muslim soldiers at Khaibar was "ya mansur amit" (O victorious, bring death) (p. 311). To fight the enemy in a thick oasis, he ordered to hew down many date-palms but sometime later he stopped further destruction (p. 311).

There were ambulance arrangements in the army; and on the first day as many as fifty Muslim soldiers were treated there (p. 312). There were as many as 20 Muslim ladies in the army—they nursed of course—of them one gave birth to a child during the campaign (p. 326-7). Jewish women and children were transferred to their safest place, but when this place surrendered, over two thousand women and children were made prisoners of war, (p. 319). After the pacification of the region of Shiqq, the Prophet transferred there his camp from ar-Raji', where it was in the early days of the war (p. 319). During the siege of the fort of Na'im, in the region of Natat, the Prophet had put on two coats of mails, one over the other; he had a *mighfar* and a *baidah* (helmet and head-cover?), a lance and a shield (p. 313). When the war prolonged, Muslim began suffering from their dwindling provisions; one day they slaughtered two of their horses (p. 317). Another day about twenty to thirty donkeys came out of the fort as-Sa'b; capturing them, the Muslims slaughtered them and lit fire to cook them. The Prophet passed thereby by chance, and made a public announcement that domestic donkeys are illicit to eat, as also temporary marriages (for a determined limit of time), (p. 317). When this fort was at last reduced, one found in the booty cloths and wine also, (p. 319). After the fort of as-Sa'b, the fort of az-Zubair was captured after three days' siege, and this was the last fort of the region of Natat, (p. 319). The fort of Katibah demanded two weeks of siege, (p. 319). It was around this fort that there were about forty thousand date-palms, and in the booty, one found five hundred bows, one hundred coats of mails, four hundred swords, and one thousand lances, (p. 320). Similar was the case with other forts. So in the booty of the fort as-Sa'b, one found a catapult (manjaniq), several covered cars (dabbabat), food stuff, wine, cloth stuff, goats and sheep, cows, donkeys etc, (p. 318-9). Of the fifteen Muslims that fell during the combats, 4 were Muhajirs and 11 Ansarites, (p. 329). Muslims numbered 1400, and there were 200 horses with them; and it was at this occasion that the rule was promulgated that a horseman would get

double the share in the booty, since he has to spend on his horse also, for fodder. For the distribution of booty, the whole was divided into 18 parts, and confided to as many chiefs, each of whom had to arrange the distribution of the shares of one hundred persons approximately, (p. 327). One of the Jews embraced Islam, and the Prophet ordered that all domestic sheep and goat found in booty should be given to this person, (p. 329). Apparently this concerned the share of the government in the booty: one fifth goes to government coffers, and four-fifths are distributed among the participants of the army. Women get handsome gifts, but ordinarily no regular share.

(220) Originally the conditions of surrender for the Khaibarites were that the Prophet Muhammad should only spare their lives; that they should leave the country with nothing except the clothes on their bodies. Later, however, the Prophet Muhammad agreed to let them remain in their former homes as Government contractors for an agricultural partnership, sharing the products of the soil on fifty-fifty ratio with the Muslim State, until such time as the State decided otherwise. During the years that followed, the Jews of Khaibar had experience of the Muslim administration, and used to say: "It is for such justice that the heaven is standing on the earth (and does not fall)". In fact, the custom of the Muslim collector was to divide the harvest into two heaps, and leave the choice to the Khaibarites to select whichever of the two they liked to take.

Other Jews

(221) There was little or no fight in Taima, Wadi al-Qura and Fadak; and they all surrendered on the same conditions as Khaibar. Taima possessed a renowned fort (of Samau'al Ibn 'Adiya), yet we do not know much about the expedition which resulted in its capitulation.

(222) Two years later, during the expedition of Tabuk (9 A.H.—630 C.E.), some more Jewish towns surrendered, such as Maqna, on the Gulf of Aqabah, yet from a military point of view there is nothing particular to relate regarding these villages inhabited by Jews.

Ruins of Qasr Marhab (superposed by governor's house, 1964) in Khaibar Valley

Prophet's Mosque with Qasr Marhab high up (1964)

CHAPTER VIII

Military Intelligence in the Time of the Prophet Muhammad

Preliminary remarks

(223) The rapidity of conquests and relative non-existence of bloodshed in the campaigns of the time of the Prophet of Islam are equalled in history only by the intensity of these conquests and the transformation of the mentality of the conquered. He began his political career with parts of a small city-State, Medina, surrounded by anarchy and incessant feuds in the whole length and breadth of the Arabian peninsula. A decade had not passed before this township of Medina became the metropolis of an empire as big as Europe excluding Russia proper. And peace was the order of the day in these million and more square miles (3 million square kilometres).

(224) His intelligence service was in no small measure responsible for this miracle. He overwhelmed the enemy with superior strategy and took them unawares while he himself possessed all the essential information required of an enemy. The subject does not seem to have been touched before. Therefore, it is not possible to trace how he established this network of intelligence service, espionage and counter-espionage at this stage. I shall try to glean facts and show how it worked.

(225) The Islamic State founded and run by the Prophet Muhammad was definitely inaugurated a month before the Hegira era, when the third Pact of 'Aqabah was concluded,

during the pilgrimage season at Mina, between the Prophet and six dozen Medinan Muslims, including two women, who all swore him allegiance to obey him in pleasant as well as unpleasant situations (*fi'il makrah w'al-manshat*), to defend him against the black and red (the whole of humanity), and to protect him and his Meccan companions even as their own kith and kin if they migrated to their town, Medina. This social contract, founding a political society, was immediately implemented, and swarms of Meccan Muslims emigrated to their new refuge. Three months had not passed on the Pact of 'Aqabah when the non-Muslim Meccans hatched a conspiracy to assassinate their co-citizen, the Prophet of Islam. This was a declaration of war on their part. (Ibn Hisham, p. 304-5, cf also p. 299, calls this pact of 'Aqabah a "pact for the war"). Here begins our story.

Intelligence work at the time of the migration

(226) In the tribalistic society of the city-State of Mecca, the assassin, when single-handed, endangered his whole tribe to the wrath of the tribe to whom the assassinated person belonged. Inter-tribal military alliances had further augmented in Mecca the security of individual tribes. The Quraishite non-Muslims of Mecca therefore decided that the work of assassination should be entrusted to a whole band of people each one of whom belonging to a different tribe. The idea was that the clan of the Prophet Muhammad together with all their allies should thus still find themselves outnumbered by their enemies, and should content themselves with blood-money in preference to a demand of extradition and even vicarious punishment of the most prominent member of the clan of the assassin if there was a chance of enforcing such a demand. The conspiracy was efficacious but crude. Apparently its very nature divulged the secret in advance, and the Prophet Muhammad came to know of it in good time (cf infra § 230), and managed to escape.

(227) There was no more security in the city of Mecca, and he was only waiting the exodus of his co-citizen Muslims

to Medina before he himself did the same. There is a nobility of character in this decision. Had he left immediately after the Pact, the remaining Muslims would have been victimized. Meccans were no better than rulers of modern ultra-civilized secular States. The continuous departure of Meccan Muslims to Medina was daily increasing the risk for his own safety, yet he preferred that to a cowardly flight. Practically all able-bodied Muslims had already left, and the plan of assassination decided the Prophet Muhammad to do what he had to do sooner or later.

(228) He took another risk : he asked his adopted son, 'Aliy (d. 661 C.E.), to sleep in his stead during the night, so as not to arouse the suspicions of the assassins who waited outside, and incidentally made another noble gesture by entrusting 'Aliy with all the deposits the Meccans, in spite of their hostility, had placed in his safe and trustworthy coffers, so that 'Aliy returned them to the rightful owners after the departure of the Prophet Muhammad.

(229) It appears that he got news of the conspiracy at mid-day, went immediately to his friend and lifelong companion Abu Bakr (d. 634 C.E.), arranged with him details of quitting the city, hiding in the cave of Thaur, outside the city, hiring a guide, waiting for three days until the agitation subsided, and then setting out for Medina by an unfrequented route. Then he returned home, and remained there until late at night, which being in the last days of the lunar month, was pitch dark. He left his house, and by-passed the siege, and reached Thaur as pre-arranged. (Ibn Hisham, p. 325-6, 328; Baladhuriy, *Ansab*, I. 261).

(230) It is also related that the news of plot of besieging the house was conveyed to him by a lady, Ruqaiqah bint Abi Saifiy ibn Hashim, an aunt of the Prophet who informed him: This night they want to assassinate thee in thy bed. (Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 75).

(231) As we are not dealing with history, which is well known, we shall content ourselves with only facts of intelligence work in this as well as later incidents. Abu Bakr's young son came next night to the cave, gave them news of all that had passed in the city during the day, and did this for all the three days of stay, passing the night in the cave, leaving it at dawn and spending the day in Mecca until late at night. A daughter of Abu Bakr used to bring provisions and other necessaries.

(232) We leave out espionage of the Meccans, frustrated by the Prophet Muhammad.

Intelligence work during the Battle of Badr

(233) 'Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, did not emigrate but remained in Mecca. As a big banker and commercial magnate, he had wide relations in many places, including the towns of Ta'if and Medina. He constantly used to write to the Prophet and inform him of the developments in Mecca. This will explain the following extract of *Ibn Sa'd*, which says: "When the caravan of the Quraish left for Syria, the Prophet Muhammad left Medina to stop it, as he had received intelligence from Mecca regarding the movements of the caravan" (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 4). Again (p. 6): "He left Medina and went as far as Dhu 'l-'Ushairah, [on the road to the port of Yanbu',] and sent two spies, Talhah Ibn 'Ubaidallah and Sa'id Ibn Zaid, to follow in the wake of the caravan up to Syria, where it had gone, remain there, and inform him when it was on the return journey. They did so, but when they returned to Medina they found that the Prophet Muhammad had got news from other sources of the arrival of the caravan and had already left the city".

(234) The Prophet Muhammad had dashed, not northwards towards Syria, wherefrom the caravan was coming, but southwards to Badr, in the direction of Mecca, to which the caravan was destined. Obviously this was a surer way of catching the caravan in time. Moreover a mountain pass, which was available at Badr, was preferable to open plains to harass

the enemy.

(235) When the Prophet Muhammad left for Badr, he sent in advance two spies, Basbas and 'Adiy, to find out where the enemy was (Ibn Sa'd, II/i, p. 7).

(236) En route, he did all he could to get correct news about the enemy (Tabariy, I, 1302 ff). It appears that he sometimes left his detachment and himself wandered in the passes. Once he encountered an old man, and asked him where the caravan was. He said he knew that, but that he would not tell unless his interlocutor (i.e., the Prophet) also told who he was and where he came from. The Prophet promised, and the talkative Bedouin said that, according to his information, the caravan was sighted on such and such a date at such and such a place, and, if the one who had informed him had not lied, the caravan must actually be at such and such a place. He added he had also learnt that the detachment of Muhammad had left such and such a place at such and such a time, and, if his informant was right, he must actually be at such and such a place. And he was right. On his turn the Prophet Muhammad said: "We are coming from the spring! What spring? 'Iraq!" (*Nahnu min ma'. Ma ma'? Al-Iraq*). 'Iraq means spring of running water.

(237) Arriving in the vicinity of Badr, the Prophet Muhammad again despatched two camel riders to get the latest news (Tabariy, I, 1299, 1302, 1303, 1305). The two went inside the township of Badr, as if for drinking water. They over heard there two maids chattering on the spring. One said: "Soon the caravan will be arriving; I shall serve them and with what I earn I shall repay my debt." This was enough, and the spies returned to inform the Prophet Muhammad that the enemy had not yet passed through Badr. The strategy was fixed accordingly.

(238) The caravan had got news that on its outward journey to Syria the Prophet Muhammad had planned to stop it. So it was not unprepared for an ambush. Before entering the

mountainous valleys of Badr, the leader, stopped at the turn called al-Hunain (Sha'miy in his *Sirah*, in loco), and set out alone for Badr. The leader, Abu Sufyan, knew the place and the people well. He came to Badr and asked if there was any news. The talkative Bedouins said that nothing strange had happened, only two camel riders had come there a little while ago for watering. Abu Sufyan followed their track and discovered some dung. He took one ball, broke it open, and found inside a date stone. He shouted, "By God, local camels do not graze on this; these are surely from the oasis, of Medina, the spies of Muhammad". He hurried back to the caravan, gave up the route passing through Badr, continued on the sea-shore, and accomplished two nights' journey at a stretch, thus escaping probable mishap. He moreover despatched an urgent emissary to Mecca asking for military intervention and help (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 428).

(239) After the escape of the caravan, the Prophet Muhammad returned to the township of Badr, in order apparently to contract alliance with local tribes for the future. Soon he learnt that the Quraishite army was coming to Badr. He decided to oppose it. One of his detachments captured two Meccan army men. They had come for watering purposes. When they were brought in the presence of the Prophet, he was at prayers. Officers present asked who they were? They said they were water carriers of the Quraishite army. The officers said, "No, you lie, you belong to the caravan of Abu Sufyan," and administered third degree methods. Whenever they beat them, the enemy said they belonged to Abu Sufyan, and when asked peacefully they repeated that they belonged to the army. When the Prophet Muhammad had finished his prayers, he attended personally, and told his companions that the circumstances did not warrant continued presence of the caravan with all its merchandise in the close neighbourhood after so many days' journey in order to send water carriers to Badr. Then he asked the prisoners about the number of the army. They said they did not know. The Prophet said, "How many camels do they slaughter daily for consumption?" They

said, "one day ten and one day nine alternatively". The Prophet Muhammad inferred they numbered between 900 and 1,000; in fact they were 950 (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 9).

Intelligence at other expeditions and at the battle of Uhud.

(240) In the expedition of Qarqarat al-Kudr, the Prophet Muhammad captured some shepherds of the enemy and asked them of the whereabouts of the tribe (*Idem*, II/i, p. 21).

(241) In the expedition of Ghatafan, Muslim detachments found in Dhu 'l-Qassah a person from the tribe of Tha'labah. They brought him before the Prophet. He was called Jabar. He told the Prophet about the enemy....and embraced Islam (*Idem*, p. 24).

(242) The Muslim victory at Badr was both unexpected and unpalatable to the Jewish capitalists at Medina. Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf, a chief of the Banu an-Nadir Jews, travelled therefore expressly to Mecca, instigated the Meccans to prepare for revenge, and assured his full support. The intelligence came to the Prophet Muhammad, and he sent a small detachment who succeeded in assasinating the chief in his own castle nipping the evil in the bud (Ibn Kathir in his *History*, IV : 6).

(243) When the Meccans prepared for the revenge of the defeat of Badr, and assembled men and material, including allies, 'Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, wrote of all these things from Mecca to the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, and thus he was not taken unawares (Ibn Sa'd, II/i, p. 25).

(244) When it was thought that the enemy must be in the neighbourhood of Medina, the Prophet Muhammad sent two spies to trace them. They brought news that the Meccans had already arrived, by-passed Medina, had gone further north

and camped at al-'Uraid,[1] apparently north-west of Mount Uhud, and that their camels were seen grazing there. The Prophet Muhammad despatched another spy, al-Hubab Ibn al-Mundhir, who entered the enemy camp and brought details of their exact number (*Idem*, p. 25-26.)

(245) "News was received by the Prophet Muhammad that Sufyan Ibn Khalid al-Hudhaliy, whose tribe lived in and around 'Uranah, was raising volunteers against the integrity of the State of Islam . . ." Action was accordingly taken (*Idem*, p. 36).

(246) "A trader came to Medina with merchandise. He stated that people of the tribes of Anmar and Tha'labah were banding themselves against the Muslims . . ." Accordingly the Prophet left on the expedition of Dhat ar-Riqa' (*Idem*, p. 43).

(247) The chieftain of the strong tribe of the Banu al-Mustaliq was al-Harith Ibn Dirar; and he called upon his people as well as those over whom he had influence to assemble for an attack on Medina. They responded to the call and began preparations. When the rumour reached the Prophet Muhammad, he despatched Buraidah Ibn al-Husaib al-Aslamiy, who was a Muslim yet, belonged to the same enemy tribe, to go and find out the truth. On his return, he

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1 Apparently this 'Uraid must be located somewhere on the West of Mount Uhud. Actually (1947) there is a mosque 'Uraid on the Eastern extremity of Uhud, which does not seem to represent the same locality. There is also question of Abu Sufyan's passing through 'Uraid, when leaving the house of Huyaiy ibn Akhtab, chief of the Banu an-Nadir, during the raid called Sawiq, in the year 2 H. (cf Ibn Sa'd, II/i, p. 20), which has some chance of being the 'Uraid on the East of Uhud. For instance Abu Sufyan could leave the village of Banu an-Nadir in the south-east of Medina, avoids the Muslim town, and passes through the Jewish suburbs on the East of Medina, then follows the bed of Qanat in order to get into the bed of 'Aqiq and thus escape to Mecca. However in this case too the probability is that 'Uraid was on the bank of 'Aqiq, that is West of Uhud.

brought news of all that was required, and action was taken accordingly with a big victory as a result (*Idem*, p. 45).

Intelligence work at the Battle of Khandaq

(248) The Prophet Muhammad got news that in Dumat al-Jandal, junction of caravan routes from Mecca and Medina to Syria and Mesopotamia, there was a strong band who harassed caravans going to Medina, and that they intended to attack Medina itself (Mas'udiy, *Tanbih*, p. 248). The Prophet set out for that place with a strong force but returned midway to Medina (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 668). It seems that the Muslim agent in Mecca had sent word that the Meccans were planning to lay siege to Medina, and that they had assembled thousands of their confederates. The report must have been expressly redirected from Medina to the camp of the Prophet. Another explanation of this hasty return is that since some of the Quraishite confederates came from the Ghatafan and Fazarah tribes, who lived in a country through which the Prophet Muhammad was then passing, and perhaps he got news of the imminent attack there and immediately returned to Medina. He had barely time enough to dig the famous ditch around the city before the confederates arrived and besieged the metropolis of Islam. (cf supra § 116 ff.)

(249) The ditch was patrolled on the Muslim side night and day by a relay system. Once two Muslim detachments, coming from opposite directions, encountered each other during the night and it was the use of the watchword which caused them to recognize each other. Yet already some blood was shed, and the matter was reported to the Prophet Muhammad for necessary action (Marghinaniy, *Dhakhirah*, ch. 23, MS Yeni Jami', Istanbul).—cf supra § 146.

(250) The unexpected prolongation of the siege exhausted food and fodder of the confederates. They tried to procure supplies from the Jews. Huyaiy Ibn Akhtab complied with the request and sent twenty camel loads of barley, date fruits and husk. It all fell into the hands of a Muslim patrolling party (Sha'miy in his *Sirah*, in loco).

(251) When the confederates despaired of taking Medina by assault, they began to move the Jewish tribes in Medina to rebel and attack the Muslims from inside. Slowly but surely they were persuaded to do this. When the suspicions of the Muslims were roused, the Prophet sent special officers and instructed them that if they found any truth in the rumour of treachery, not to divulge it: they should tell the Muslims, a pre-arranged phrase reassuring them. The secret emissaries found the situation much worse than the Muslims had suspected (cf, supra, ch. Khandaq).

(252) Now the Prophet Muhammad resorted to sowing suspicions and dissensions among the confederates. A newly-converted Muslim was entrusted with the delicate task. He first went to the Quraizite Jews in Medina and told them: "It is not so sure that the Meccans will succeed cent per cent, and if they retire to their homes, you cannot single-handed defend yourselves against Muhammad. So make sure of the extermination of Muslims, and do not take sides with the Meccans unless you are assured of their *bona fides*. In my opinion it is wiser to ask for hostages from them before you take up arms against the Muslims." They found it a good idea. The same agent then went to the camp of the confederates, the Quraish and the Ghatafan, and suggested to them that according to his information the Jews had entered into a conspiracy with Muhammad, and wanted to get hold of some of the prominent leaders of the confederates and hand them over to Muhammad as a token of Jewish-Muslim concord. "So be careful. I would rather suggest that you should ask the Jews to rebel on a Sabbath day; for the Muslims on that day would be taken unawares on the sides of the Jews." Then he retired to the Muslim camp and spread some other news, particularly that the Jews had asked the confederates to hand over some hostages as a pledge of fighting to the end. When somebody came and related the rumour to the Prophet Muhammad, he remarked, "Perhaps we ourselves had ordered them to do that" *la'allana amarnahum bi-dhalik*. A certain

Mas'ud an-Nammam heard this remark of the Prophet and hurried to the Quraishite camp and reported to Abu Sufyan what the Prophet Muhammad had said (cf. for this last fact, Ibn Hajar, *Isabah*, No. 3074, Mas'ud al-Nammam). In the meantime, the Jewish emissaries had arrived in the camp of the confederates and demanded hostages as a pledge that they would not desert the Jews at any cost. The propaganda had made good effect. The confederates refused to hand over hostages, and on the contrary demanded of the Jews the sacrilege of fighting on the sacred Sabbath day. Thus the Muslim objective was fully achieved (*Ibn Hisham, Tabariy, Ibn Sa'd*, etc., in loco).

(253) The Quraishites tried to break through the Muslim lines by assault two or three times but failed, and dared not repeat the attempt by frontal attack. Still they continued to send patrols during the night to see if the Muslims could be taken in some way unawares. For over ten days the Muslims were besieged day and night (*Ibn Sa'd*, III, p. 49).

(254) During the last hours of the siege, it was a night of terrific wind and cold. The Prophet Muhammad despatched a special scout to go alone to the enemy camp, several miles away, and report. He found, that in utter disgust the Quraishites were returning to Mecca, and fearing Muslim pursuit had appointed Khalid Ibn al-Walid and 'Amr Ibn al-'As, with 200 horsemen, to serve for rearguard action. The scout, Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yaman, saw all this, and on returning related it to the Prophet Muhammad (*Idem*, p. 50).

Intelligence work in other minor expeditions and also in that of Hudaibiyah

(255) Akkashah Ibn Mihsan was sent on a punitive expedition. The enemy got news and fled with all its men and beasts. The commander despatched Shuja', Ibn Wahb as a scout, who, finding camel traces, followed them. Soon he came across a number of the enemy people, whom he overwhelmed, and on promise of safety found out where the

herds were. The Muslim detachment captured 200 camels, and let the enemy prisoners free in thankfulness (*Idem*, p. 61). According to Maqriziy (I, 264), it was in Ghamr, territory of the Banu Asad.

(256) Zaid Ibn Harithah's punitive expedition against Banu Sulaim; a woman was captured who revealed where his people were. Apart from prisoners, booty of camels and sheep were found (Ibn Sa'd, II/i, p. 62).

(257) 'Aliy's punitive expedition against Fadak: an enemy person was arrested in the locality of al-Hamaj. On assurance of his personal safety, he revealed where his people were. Thus 500 camels and 2,000 sheep and goats were captured (*Idem*, p. 65).

(258) A detachment had successfully returned from an errand and every member claimed having himself killed the enemy chief. The Prophet Muhammad examined the sword-blades of them all, and discovering traces of digested food on the point of one of them declared that the owner of that sword had killed the enemy chief (*Idem*, p. 66).

(259) When starting for the Pilgrimage to Mecca during the expedition of al-Hudaibiyah in the year 6 A.H.—627 C.E., the Prophet despatched a scout in advance. The intelligence of the enemy was brought to him while he was still on the march to Mecca. It appeared that the Quraishites had got news of the expedition, were determined to oppose it, and had requisitioned the services of their allies, the tribes of Ahabish. The Prophet Muhammad called a meeting of his council, and discussed whether it would not be expedient to attack the habitations of these ignorant allies of the Quraishites; for it would not only be easy booty but would also serve as a good lesson to others intending to render similar sort of service to the enemies of Islam. Finally the Prophet Muhammad endorsed the opinion of Abu Bakr, and continued on the peaceful religious expedition of pilgrimage (Bukhariy, 64 : 37 Ibn Kathir,

History, 4 : 173). And he travelled thereafter by a less common route in order to conceal his own movements from the Quraishites (Ibn Kathir, IV, p. 165).

Intelligence work in the war of Khaibar

(260) While marching on Khaibar, the Prophet Muhammad learnt that the Ghatafanites had gone to the help of their allies of Khaibar. The Prophet diverted his route as if his target was Ghatafan and not Khaibar, and spread news to the effect. The Ghatafanites returned to their undefended families and property, and never moved out during the campaign of Khaibar (*Ibn Hisham*, pp. 757-758 ; *Tabariy*, I, 1575-1576).

(261) The subterranean passage of a fortress in Khaibar was learned of by the Prophet Muhammad from an enemy person which helped in its easy conquest (Sha'miy, *Sirah*, § Hisn al-Zubair).—cf Maqriziy, I, 312.

(262) On the conquest of Khaibar, the Prophet Muhammad demanded the custodian of the municipal treasury to hand over the balance. When he was told that there was nothing left, he let the custodian go, warning him that he would forfeit his life if it was found out later on that he had lied. Subsequently he learnt from a Jew that the custodian visited a ruin from time to time in a suspicious manner. On searching the place, the treasury was recovered, the custodian beheaded, and the informant rewarded (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 763).—cf Maqriziy, I, 320.

Intelligence work at the conquest of Mecca, the campaigns of Hunain and Ta'if

(263) The Meccans had violated the truce. The Prophet made huge preparations. A Medinite Muslim wrote a letter to some of his friends and trustees in Mecca, saying that the Prophet Muhammad was making immense preparations for an expedition, and may be he intended to attack Mecca. The

Prophet got news, despatched 'Aliy on horse-back to overtake a woman who had left Medina in a suspicious manner, quite alone, on a camel. 'Aliy soon overtook her and ordered her to hand over the message. She denied possessing one. She at last was told that she would be stripped of her clothes, whereupon she took out a letter out of her chignon of hair, which was duly brought before the Prophet (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 808).

(264) The Prophet received advice that the Hawazinites were planning to raid Islamic territory. He was in Mecca. Therefrom he sent a special intelligence officer, who spent several days among the enemy and brought necessary information (*Ibn Hisham*, p. 842).

(265) During the campaign of Hawazin, an enemy spy entered the Muslim camp, overheard and saw many things, and then tried to escape. The Prophet Muhammad noticed the suspicious behaviour, asked people to pursue him, and having captured him, ordered him to be beheaded (*Bukhariy*, 56: 173; Abu Davud, 15: 110; (*Muslim*, and the *Mishkat*, in loco).

General

(266) The Prophet Muhammad had agents in Mecca, Najd, Khaibar and Awtas (country of Hawazin) who used to write to him secretly. This refers to the time before they were conquered by Muslim armies (Al-Kattaniy, *al-Taratib al-Idariyah*, I; 362-363).

(267) There are references to what may look like the "fifth columns". For instance Baladhuriy (*Ansab*, I, 210) relates that there were two Muslim youths in Mecca, persecuted by their families and kept in house prison. It was about the year 3 H., when the Prophet sent an agent from Medina and instructed him: "Go to Mecca and see such and such a goldsmith, who is a sincere Muslim, converted in the secret; hide yourself in his house and try to contact the prisoners ....." In fact the errand was a success.

(268) During the expedition of Qutbah, one of the enemy was captured, and on being asked to give information he pretended to be dumb. He was kept under observation. Soon he raised a cry of alarm to warn his tribesmen. He was immediately beheaded (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 117).

(269) In order to ensure secrecy of the movements, the Prophet always used apparently misleading movements, such as marching for some days in a wrong direction and then converging towards the object. In Tabuk there was fear of encountering the Byzantine emperor, which was not an easy affair. So in this one expedition alone people were told in advance of the objective (*Ibn Sa'd*, II/i, p. 119). The expedition of Tabuk was undertaken on learning from Nabatean caravans coming to Medina that Heraclius intended to invade Muslim territory (Maqriziy, *Imta'*, I, 445).

A few words about the legal aspect of military intelligence

(270) We have considered so far only espionage in war time. It can as well be resorted to in peace time.

(271) It is a right of belligerency to inflict death on the enemy. So there is no difficulty in punishing enemy spies, when caught, with death. It rests with the commanding officer to decide whether an enemy spy should be given the supreme penalty or some lesser one, or even set him free on promise of better behaviour in the future. In order to extract information, captured spies have sometimes been tortured, and nobody yet seems prepared to forego that right. Nobody is equally prepared yet to forego resorting to intelligence service or espionage in one's own favour in spite of the risk to one's employees, if caught.

(272) Regarding spies in time of peace, Muslim jurists say that there is no difference between men and women in this connection, both being liable to exactly the same treatment. They, however, insist that a minor should on no account be given the supreme punishment of death. There is a section

of classical jurists who theorize that espionage being less reprehensive than disbelief, a spy should not be punished with death; for Islam tolerates non-Muslims as resident aliens and protected subjects with complete equality before law along with Muslims. But they forget that a spy may cause much greater harm to the entire Muslim State than a peaceful non-Muslim subject. If there is an international agreement that spies should not be punished with death, there will be no difficulty for Islamic States to adhere to such a pact.

(273) There can, however, be no two opinions that a person suspected of espionage should be given a fair trial and all the opportunity to defend himself. Exigencies of war may require summary trials, yet Islamic sense of justice would never allow anybody to be punished without legal procedure and fair trial.

Naval warfare in the time of the Prophet Muhammad

(274) There is not much to relate on the Islamic navy in the time of the Prophet, yet sea warfare and marine expeditions are not entirely lacking. We shall, however, exclude from the discussion civil voyages, such as the departure of Muslim (Meccan) refugees to Abyssinia, or the arrival of the Ash'arites from the Yaman to Jar, en route to Medina in boats, or the adventures of Tamim ad-Dariy, related in the *Sahih* of Muslim, chap. 52, No. 119.

(275) The first reference to sea warfare dates from the year 8 A. H. (629 C.E.). In his *History of Damascus*, Ibn 'Asakir (Ed. 1951, Vol. I, p. 394) relates the following incident in connection with the Battle of Mu'tah: "A companion of the Prophet, originally of the tribe of Ash'ar, says that the Prophet sent him on a mission in which he embarked on a boat and reached the region of Ailah (modern 'Aqabah). He learnt there of the arrival of Zaid Ibn Harithah and his army in Balqa, and their encounter with the Byzantine forces and their allies from among the Arab tribes. He hurried to the place where

the battle was raging, and he and his companions took part in the battle on the side of the Muslim army and fought a bitter fight." (The rest of the narration is of no interest here.) However, this story shows that the Prophet Muhammad had sent, by way of sea, an auxiliary force to help the army sent to Mu'tah by land.

(276) The other incident is mentioned by *Ibn Sa'd* (II/i, p. 117-8), and others, and according to Maqriziy, *Imta'*, I : 443, this relates to the year 9 A.H. (630 C.E). We learn that the Prophet sent a detachment of 300 strong under the Mudlijite, 'Alqamah Ibn Mujazziz, in the month of Rabi' al-Akhir/June, to the sea coast near Mecca. The people of the port of Shu'aibah had sighted some Negroes (pirates?) in a number of boats. 'Alqamah and his party reached an island . . . thereupon the Negroes fled, and the Muslim army returned.

(277) To conclude, it may be mentioned that the Qur'an (30 : 41) refers to sea warfare and the calamities brought about upon it by man ; and this is related in the 30th chapter entitled *Rum* (Byzantines). The reference to piracy (18 : 79) is regarding pre-Islamic times, and other references to the sea in the Qur'an are too numerous to mention here. There are numerous references in the Hadith also to sea warfare of Muslims, particularly as to predictions of the Prophet Muhammad regarding times to come. These do not directly concern us here.

CHAPTER IX

Military Department of the Muslim State in the Time of the Prophet

(278) This short study, by a non-professional, may usefully be brought to an end by a brief expose of the military department in the time of the Prophet, how it developed and how it worked?

(279) Muslim State came effectively into existence when the Holy Prophet came to Madinah and settled there. In the beginning there was no organization for military purposes, be that for defence or for offence. It was natural, since there was no State in Madinah before Islam which the Prophet could appropriate along with its organisms; and the Prophet had also not come as a conqueror, to annex Madinah to his State territory and its existing administration. On the contrary he had come to Madinah as a refugee—if one may say so—without any material means. He came there and saw there chaos and anarchy. So he proposed creation of a political organization, a sort of city-State. Local people agreed to it. But everything was to create anew, and to ameliorate with trial and experience.

(280) What is remarkable is that scarcely six months after his arrival in the chaotic agglomeration of Madinah, he was able to start sending military expeditions against his enemies, enemies of his newly founded State.

Substitute of a Standing Army

(281) There was no standing army, and there were even no material means to organize one such: the State was poor

and had no regular revenues, yet the Quran solved the problems: military service was declared to be part of the religious duties. God had purchased Muslims' persons and properties in exchange of Paradise; so they should fight in His path, to kill and be killed (Q. 9/111, among many other verses, earlier and later). The entire Muslim population became the standing army of potential combatants. Everybody was to undergo military training, which in fact they did even before conversion to Islam. The government encouraged to develop it by all possible ways, military and moral. In so far as I could see, the Quran permits only a defensive (including preventive) war: "And combat in the path of God those who combat you, and do not transgress; verily God does not like the transgressors. And kill them wherever you find them . . ." (Q. II., 190-191; cf. also XXII. 39-41: "Permission [of combat] is given to those who are combated . . "). The second part of the first quotation viz., II, 191, as also all the other Quranic passages which speak of killing the enemy wherever he may be found concern the combatant subjects of a State with whom war is already in existence.

Recruitment for Expeditions

(282) The method was as follows: In his capacity as the head of the State and supreme commander, the Prophet used to decide—may be in consultation with trusted and experienced friends—what number was necessary for a given expedition, and then he announced, apparently in the mosque at the time of the service of prayer that those who were prepared to volunteer should inscribe their name in a special register that was opened for the purpose, apparently in the mosque itself. Nobody knew beforehand the destination. When the required number was reached the Prophet nominated a commander, and it was to him that he gave confidentially all instructions, including the rules of military conduct. There are cases when for further security and secrecy, the Prophet handed over a sealed letter to the commander and added:

"Go in the direction of highlands (apparently meaning: not towards the sea shore but in the opposite direction) and after three days of march open the letter and comply with the instructions". Each volunteer had his private arms, the government also aided when necessary.

(283) As we have seen above, the first military actions were intended for barring caravan route to the pagan Meccans. Once the interference began, action and reaction and counter-reaction had to succeed in chain. And sometimes it was necessary to despatch at a minute's notice, naturally for minor actions. For this purpose the residential university of the Suffah, housed in the very Mosque of the Prophet, and next door to the living quarters of the head of the State, constituted a sufficient source. The inmates of the Suffah were the most pious and enthusiastic young men, generally very poor and with no attachment to the soil for agriculture, commerce or industry. They did do some job work just to earn the minimum necessary for subsistance, and spent their time in learning, praying and leading a life of spiritual avocation. At any time during day or night, the Prophet could count on them, and they at once sat out as the Prophet would direct them.

(284) Our sources (Bukhariy, *jihad* 140, Muslim, *hajj* 424, etc.) speak on the one hand of volunteers inscribing (*iklitab*) their names in special registers, and they also mention sometimes (Bukhariy, *maghazi*, 79; Muslim, *taubah* 53, 55) that at occasions the volunteers surpassed all registration. This happened not only during the expedition of Tabuk, to which these sources refer, but presumably also in expeditions like that of the conquest of Mecca : the Prophet wanted to surprise the enemy, and had sent word to various townships and tribal settlements of the Muslim territory: "Be ready to join the army at a minute's notice", and he himself followed a zig-zag path from Madinah to Mecca, and en route the said tribal contingents one after the other swelled the forces the Prophet was leading. Naturally a central register of all the volunteers was unthinkable.

Distribution of Booty

(285) In pre-Islamic Arabia there was a customary rule that the chief commander of an expedition had the right to the fourth of the entire booty captured by his men; the capture before the general plunder and also the indivisible fractions also went to the same personality. Soon after his arrival in Medinah, the Prophet had to promulgate rules in this connection, and here is what he did:

(286) He abolished the Biblical law (*Deuteronomy* XIII, 16 etc.) to put to fire all booty captured from an enemy, as he suppressed the pre-Islamic Arabian custom concerning the part of the commander, who received thenceforward in the same proportion as an ordinary soldier, and substituted the central government for the ancient commander. Further he reduced the share of the central government, and from the ancient fourth, he brought it down to fifth only, the rest (the four-fifths) going to the members of the expedition. This increase in the share of the volunteers, at the expense of the government, could become a source of attraction to neutral mercenaries, who instead of siding with the enemies of Islam would prefer offering their services to the Prophet. And we know that there have been non-Muslim participants in the Muslim expeditions. Another important reform of military law was that, unlike pre-Islamic days, when booties captured in Arabia were individual, and other comrades did not share one's booty,—with the result that combatants thought more of captures than of discipline, more of personal gain than of the general interest of the army, of the tribe or the community,—the Muslim law provided that all the captures would be centralized and would be distributed equally among the members of the army irrespective of the quantity of each person's capture, irrespective also of the fact whether a soldier did actually fight or remain in reserve or did some other duty by order of the commander.

(287) The fifth of the booty of each expedition went, as said, to the coffers of the central government, if there was fighting. There were other rules in cases of movable property

coming from the enemy without fighting. An unwritten law said that of every booty a choice gift was to be presented to the commander. This pre-Islamic practice was retained in Islam momentarily, and went to the Prophet. We need not enter into these details here (for which see my *Muslim Conduct of State*). What is important to note is that the Quran also laid down rules as to beneficiaries of the government share of the booties. The poor, the needy, the families of the Muslim soldiers killed in the battle had naturally the prior rights (cf. Quran VIII, 41) to this income. But the Security of the State territory could on no account be neglected. And of both the civil revenues of the State as well as the irregular and non-recurrent income from booty, the Prophet attributed a considerable part to defensive measures. The Quran (IX, 60) laid down in clear terms the principles of the budget, and included the military preparations among the beneficiaries of the State income. A very interesting passage of the Imam Muhammad ash-Shaibaniy (*Sharh as-Siyar al Kabir*, II, 255-6, or new edition § 1978) gives details of the organization of a sort of semi-permanent army corps, a system which the Caliph 'Umar would later develop, under the famous name of *diwan*, with increased income and increased needs of the Muslim State. Here is what Shaibaniy reports :

"The basis of this rule is that the Prophet had nominated Mahmiyah ibn Jaz' az-Zubaidy to be in charge of the booties of the expedition of the Banu 'l-Mustaliq, as it was this same officer who had to take care of all the governmental fifths of booties. The civil revenues of the State were separated and had their men (*ahl*, officials ? beneficiaries ?) and for income from enemies were also men (officials ? beneficiaries?). From the civil revenues the Prophet accorded aid to orphans, old-weaklings, and poors. However when an orphan reached the age of puberty and military service became his duty, he was transferred (from the beneficiaries of civil revenues) to those of the military income. Yet if this (orphan) disliked military service, he no more received anything even from civil revenues of the State, and he was ordered to earn his liveli-

hood himself. The Prophet never refused demands. Once two persons came to him demanding aid from the governmental fifth received from the booty of the Banu 'l-Mustaliq, and he replied, if you like. I shall give you something from it, but (you should know that) any rich and able-bodied person capable of earning has no right to benefit from this income".

Means of combat

(288) In the armies of the time of the Prophet, we come across names of following arms, but the list cannot be considered exhausted; bow and arrow, lance and spear, sword, catapults (*manjaniq*), covered movable cars of different kinds (*dabbabah, dabur, 'arradah*), shield, coats of mails. The Negroes sometimes seem to dispose of their particular weapons, for instance, Wahshiy had killed Hamzah, uncle of the Prophet, during the battle of Uhud, by throwing on him from away a certain whirling weapon. The covered cars, just referred to, were used to demolish walls: people inside these cars did the digging work and were protected by these covered cars from stones, arrows or lances thrown by the enemy. We have seen above that not only the Prophet had resorted to digging a ditch around his camp, but also to throwing artificial thorned balls and even branches of thorn-trees to cause difficulty of movement to the enemy coming out to attack Muslims. Night attacks are also known in those times.

(289) There was a local industry to provide these needed things. Of course the material was also imported if possible, in spite of the embargo on such exports for instance from Byzantine territory. The tribe Banu 'l-Qain is proverbial as ironsmiths. The arrows of Yathrib (Madinah) are also of some repute. Swords have two preferable names, Mashrafiy (from Syria) and Muhannad (from India).

(290) Horse was the animal of combat par excellence and was used for attack and for flight. Camel was used for transport both of men and material, and was abundant. Its force

and extraordinary qualities or endurance gave Arab armies a mobility which was unsurpassed by the neighbouring empires of Persia and Byzantium.

(291) It goes without saying that gradually the stocks of arms were accumulated, both by booty and purchase. Horses too, as we have seen above in § 207.

Training

(292) To encourage military training, there are numerous exhortations of the Prophet. But he took also practical measures. Races were frequently organized both for men and beasts, and the Prophet attended in person these occasions and distributed prizes. The Mosque of the Races (*masjid as-sabaq*) commemorates his seat to this day in Madinah wherefrom he observed which horses won the race. He attached great importance to shooting practice and reaching the target. Other exercises are also mentioned by his biographers, such as pelting stones, wrestling and the like. Swimming too is also very much recommended, and the Prophet had himself learned swimming when young.

Administration

(293) An information system was developed to procure useful data on actual or prospective enemies. Correspondents in different enemy centres; occasional eye-spy also came across in the life of the Prophet of Islam, as referred to in the foregoing chapters.

(294) Commanders were selected for their experience and sagacity. Military capacities, and not ascetism were taken into consideration. The commanders changed from expedition to expedition, and thus the number of experienced and seasoned officers increased. When the Prophet himself led an army, he had a military council to consult on measures to be taken. His instructions to commanders—several of which are recorded by historians—are full of Islamic sagacity, blending spiritual and temporal

aims of the religion he was teaching. For instance unnecessary bloodshed was forbidden.

(295) Propaganda was also much resorted to. Arabs loved poetry, and satires spread like wild fire. Knowing its importance in the country, the Prophet employed talented official poets against the enemies of Islam, and his saying is well-known: When Hassan ibn Thabit employs his gift to defend Islam and the Prophet, the Holy Spirit animates him, and his verses are more piercing in the enemy than the arrows.

(295/a) Human element seems to have played a major role in the military life of the Holy Prophet. For he wanted to set an example which any other human being could also imitate. One such point to note is that he pardoned at times, and punished at others. Of the numerous instances of pardon, with good result, we have already mentioned (cf § 177) his behaviour at the conquest of Mecca. One more example may be cited here: It was a certain Ghaurath ibn al-Harith al-Muharibiy in the expedition of ar-Raji' (according to Bukhariy, Ibn Hisham, Tabariy and Ibn Hazm), or Du'thur Ibn al-Harith al-Muharibiy in the expedition of Dhu-Amr according to Ibn Sa'd, Baladhuriy andMaqriziy), —whatever be the name of the person or place—the Prophet was taking rest one day alone, after the dispersal of the enemy. When the enemy chief saw this from a hiding place on the nearby mountain, he came stealthily, and with a sword unsheathed shouted: "O Muhammad, who will save thee now from me ?" The Prophet woke up and quietly replied: "God ! " This calm and confidence so much upset the rude Bedouin that he began trembling and the sword fell from his hand. The Prophet seized it, and said: "Now, who will save thee from me?" "None" was the reply. The Prophet pardoned him and returned him his sword also. This impressed so much the Bedouin mind of the enemy that he forthwith embraced Islam, and spontaneously became a missionary of the new faith. Of course the Prophet was acting in such cases on the great Quranic precept (41/34): "Good and evil are not equal; react with what is the best and lo! the one

between thee and whom there was enemity turns as if he is a friend full of warmth." This was so to say a psychological warfare, and like all other warfares, in this also risks were to take, with success sometimes and failure at others. The Prophet did that sometimes even without the enemy knowing it. So Ibn al-Jauziy (Al-Wafa', p. 696) records: Salamah ibn al-Akwa' had persued single handed and on foot a whole cavalcade of the bandits of the Fazarah, and had already recovered half of their pillage when the Prophet rejoined him in succour along with some men. Salamah asked for an horse, and promised to exterminate the whole band of robbers who were already exhausted and suffering from thirst and fatigue. The Prophet replied: "You have subdued (them), so do indulgence". Let us now cite an example of clemency with not so good results is that of Abu-'Azzah (cf Ibn Hisham, p. 471, 556, 591): He was made prisoner of war at Badr. He was so poor that he could not pay his ransom, and had no rich friends either to help him. The Prophet had pity of him, and let him go gratis, on the parole that he would never again take up arms against Islam. Violating his pledge, he participated again in the ensuing battle of Uhud. He was again captured, and this time the Prophet ordered him to be beheaded. Of the examples of punishment, we may cite the case of 'Uqbah ibn Abu Mu'ait. He was a most stupid enemy of Islam, persecuted relentlessly the Prophet, and attempted several times even to murder him. Captured in the battle of Badr, he was punished with death by order of the Prophet. (cf Ibn Hisham etc. *in loco*). Although we have no possibility to know how this person would have reacted if he had obtained clemency, but Muslim jurists and military commanders have a precedent in the *sunnah* of the Prophet to say that they are free to pardon or punish according to occasions.

(295/b) Filling the soldiers with enthusiasm, so that a war becomes to them not a mere professional duty but one's own and personal affair of the greatest possible importance, such is another point which we can easily add to this list, on the basis what the Prophet did before the commencement of

the battle, and in the course of the battle, promising divine reward in the Hereafter, and setting the personal example of bravery at the most critical moment. Touching scenes have been recorded on the part of his simple yet sincere companions. A Turkish friend, a retired officer of the army, Mahmud Gunduz has very kindly suggested a work on the battles of the Prophet with the modern principles of war, the so-called MOSSCOMES (i. e. movement, offensive, surprise, security, co-operation, objective, mass, economy of forces, and simplicity) applied to them. Further how the Prophet estimated the situations, took prompt decisions and proceeded to lead the troops? The material,—the raw material—collected in the foregoing pages would easily convince the reader that even a modern trained and experienced general would not have done better than what the Holy Prophet has done. We can add, on the basis of the life-history of this "lay and improvided general" that the Prophet was—sal-lal-lahu-alaihi-wa-sallam—other principles of military science for couping with perillous situations, particularly at times of apparent defeat in the battles of Uhud and Hunain, and how he restored at once or very soon the situations. The result was that the Prophet could himself say confidently and without least exaggeration : "I vanquish (the enemy) by mere terror which attains as far as the distance of a month's journey". Wars less bloody, more decisive, transforming more profoundly have never been seen in the records of human history. The wars of the Prophet of Islam were nor intended as military exploits, of conquests or domination, but to cure the ailing humanity. Thereupon must one judge the grandeur of these "battles" and greatness of the man who gave us the model battles!

Conclusion

(296) It is my duty, in conclusion, to mention gratefully that it was my Scoutmaster of student days, Mr. 'Aliy Musa Riza, of Hyderabad-Deccan, India, who gave me the idea of sketching the maps (accompanying this study) when I first left

for the Hijaz in 1932. I succeeded then to a limited extent, and could prepare the map of Uhud only. In 1939 I again visited the sites, and was fortunate enough to visit Badr and Ta'if also. Then I prepared the map of Badr and revised that of Uhud together with that of the Ditch. They were first shown to the world when I was invited to deliver a lantern lecture on the subject at the Sorbonne in June of the same year. I owe thanks to Mr. Glaeser of Paris (which were printed in the French version of this book) for his fine execution of the maps and preparation of the lantern slides at very short notice in Paris. In 1946 I had the opportunity of again visiting for a prolonged period the holy places of Islam, and the map of the Ditch (*Khandaq*) had to be prepared anew as during the sojourn I discovered several points of importance, and in fact I was taken round the great mountain of Uhud by the Nawab of Kuravai, India, in his jeep to Birkat az-Zubair, to the lake of 'Aqul, etc., and I was fortunate enough to discover the site of the twin towers of Shaikhain. In June 1964 I have had the good luck of visiting again Madinah, and I was then able to pay a short visit to Khaibar, for which I am greatly thankful to my Madinan friends. God bless them.

(297) Still, not being a professional surveyor, and having had no instruments at my disposal except a small compass and a camera, I have much diffidence in presenting even the best that I could do in the circumstances. If this inspires someone more capable than myself, the purpose of this publication will have been achieved. If the Sa'udi Government allows me, or someone else, it would be worthwhile to study some more sites, particularly Wadi' 'l-Qura, Tabuk, Dumat 'al-Jandal, Maqna, Jarba, Adhruh, Mu'tah, etc., and to draw maps of the battles of the Prophet there. I leave it to Providence.

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